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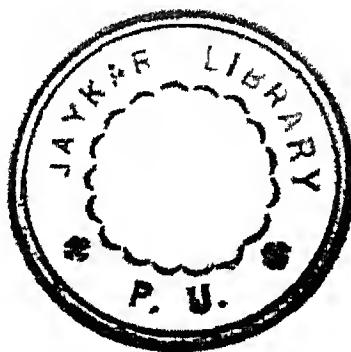
M E M O I R S O F A H I N D O O.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PANDURANG HÀRÌ.

CHAPTER XX.

HAVING come to the resolution mentioned in the preceding chapter, I lay down under a tree. To sleep was impossible, agitated as I felt by doubts and fears, both on Sagoonah's account and my own. The singular conduct of the goatherd also haunted my mind, and I gave up all idea of obtaining even a moment's repose. While I lay ruminating on these things, I fancied I heard footsteps approaching towards me, and listening more attentively, I found I was not mistaken. To remain where I was would expose me to robbery, perhaps to death. Seeing no other resource open for safety, I resolved to climb up the tree under which I had been lying. I knew that I must not lose a moment; but, on attempting to mount, I found it was too large to climb. The voices came nearer, and compelled me to relinquish what seemed my last hope. I hastily raked up the earth near the roots of the tree, and buried my silver chains, concealing the ring

given me by the goatherd in the folds of my turban. I then went a short distance off, and laid myself flat on the ground, trusting to the darkness of the hour for preventing my being observed. The voices seemed by this time to be very close to where I lay—they were near the tree; and I heard one of them say, “It is strange! we agreed to meet at the fort, yet there are no tidings of him. What can have detained him?” “Oh, he has been smoking ganza, I suppose, and is fallen into a two-days’ slumber.” “It cannot be,” said the first voice; “something unexpected must have happened at the cavern.” “What, think you the idol has visited him with his vengeance?” said the second. “Nonsense,” said the other. “This will turn out to be something very serious, depend upon it; Kokoo never failed in this way before.” “But he would be of no use were he here now; the she-devils are fled, and how they got away is a mystery.” Here the voices seemed retreating from me, and I could catch nothing more than detached expressions, such as “Trim-buckje,” “old woman’s business,” and others of a similar nature. The direction taken by these persons was towards the road conducting to the glen.

I now arose and returned to my old place near the tree, leaving my treasure still buried. I had no doubt but one of the men who had passed so near me was the same whom I had heard in Sagoonah’s dilapidated dwelling appoint Asseerghur as the place where he was to meet his mysterious companion, who, it seemed, was also named Kokoo.

Whether Kokoo meant the tall or short man whom I had barred in the cave I could not tell, and I sat waiting impatiently for the dawn of day. As soon as it had dawned I set out, and in an hour arrived at Asseerghur, where I found every one busy in preparing to garrison the fort, as war had commenced with the Peeshwa at Poona, Scindea, as well as the Berar Rajah, having combined to overwhelm the English troops. The cause of this war was the murder of the holy Shastry, on his way from Guzerat, by the relentless Trimbuckje, the agent of the cruel Peeshwa Badjerao. The British Resident at Poona found it impossible to pass by this flatigious act unnoticed, and, as before related, insisted on Trimbuckje being delivered up to the English. Since his escape from their hands, the Peeshwa still continued to befriend him; and, deaf to all the remonstrances of the Resident (with whom he professed amity, as well as with his Government), involved himself in hostilities against the English, in concert with Scindea and the Rajah of Berar. He felt confident of success, and, calling Mahratta ingenuity to his aid, caused a report to be circulated that a large body of Pindarees were within two days' march of Poona. The whole of the British force was instantly marched against them, and the opportune moment chosen for striking an exterminating blow against the few British troops left in the city. These the Peeshwa imagined he should destroy very easily; but a regiment of Europeans arriving from Bombay, he became alarmed, and sent a vakeel to the Resi-

dent, requesting they might return to Bombay. This request was not attended to. The vakeel again visited the Resident, and conducted himself with great insolence ; and at last, half unsheathing his sword, bade him prepare for war. This was not unexpected, and the Resident immediately quitted his house for the camp. He narrowly escaped ; for the Mahratta rabble attacked, and setting fire to his house, completely demolished it. The main body of the English army was at this time far distant in pursuit of the pretended Pindaree force, and only about one thousand men were left with the Resident to make a stand against the almost innumerable forces of the Peeshwa. The people of Asseerghur were astonished at the valour of the English at the battle of Kirkee, where, with only two guns, they gained a decided victory over the tens of thousands of the Mahratta horse and foot, drove the Peeshwa from his capital, and took possession of his palace. These events had damped the courage of the people of Asseerghur, who, while lamenting the fate of the Poona Peeshwa, expressed their persuasion that Scindea, their master, would show the conquerors a very different kind of game. I, however, who had seen him in the field, had my doubts upon this subject, the expression of which I took good care to keep in profound silence.

Penniless as I was, the idea of again entering the military service, of which I before thought I had enough, came into my mind. It was true that my duties would interfere with

my search of Sagoonah ; but it was equally true that, destitute of money, I could not, if I remained as I was then situated, follow up the pursuit. The chances of my military avocations might give me some direction, or lead me near the spot where she whom I loved had found a refuge. Those only who know what it is to be in an agony of doubt, such as I then was, can appreciate my sufferings. A female whom I tenderly loved was pursued up and down by powerful and violent men, while her fate was unknown to me, and I could gain no trace of her footsteps ; one who was a most ardent lover, and devoted his life and soul to his mistress, was even ignorant of her resting-place, and unable to afford her protection, even if he discovered her ! What, then, could I do ? What resource was left me ? Was not my situation the most cruel on the face of the earth ? Could I be blamed for my resolution ? Bitter thoughts also hinted to me, that the enemies of Gunput Rao might even now have traced Sagoonah. Might she not at last accept the hand of his son, should he be discovered ? Reflections like these almost drove me into madness. Others might be more fortunate in the circumstances of life than myself, but whose heart could be more devoted to the object of its regard ? I lived but for Sagoonah ; and, though poor in fortune, I was rich in stored-up love—in the fortune of the heart—and in the pure ore of a constant and boundless affection.

While I was thus ruminating on my unhappy destiny, I

saw a party of English sepoys led prisoners by some of Scindea's soldiers. One amongst them had his arms tied behind him, a circumstance for which I could not account. On going up to the culprit, what was my surprise on recognising Fuzl Khan, the second Pindaree, and son of the sword-grinder and kabob-fryer at Broach. He did not appear to recognise me. On inquiry, I found he had been seized as a deserter from the English, and the sepoys were leading him away, when a party of Scindea's soldiers took both captors and captive prisoners, and were then conducting them to Asseerghur. Having made up my mind to try a soldier's life again, it appeared to me that Scindea's service was as likely to answer my purpose as any other, and that promotion was almost certain, either by my past experience, and consequent merit as a soldier, or by intrigue. With the intention of entering myself, I proceeded up the hill on the summit of which stands the strong fort of Asseerghur ; and I reached the gates just as they were flung widely open to admit the prisoners and their guard. Admittance was readily given to the captives and their guard, but it was surlily denied to me. I was obliged to submit to numerous interrogations ; and after waiting an hour, was only allowed to seat myself in the inner chowkee or guard-room. As soon as I was able, I made my wish known of being admitted as a soldier into the garrison ; and I was conducted to a jummahdar of foot, who, being informed of my desire, accepted my services, and settled my pay. The

former were likely to be very arduous, and the latter trifling enough. I was told, however, that I might scrape together by plunder a round sum of rupees. I was glad to hear this, not so much for the sake of pecuniary benefit, as because I should have a chance of being employed at a distance, and not be confined to garrison duty, which would entirely preclude the possibility of my discovering Sagoonah.

The jummahdar had a deputy named Nagoo. This fellow's real business was to deliver necessaries and pay, and to settle disputes between the soldiers ; but as Mah-rattas are not over-nice in fulfilling the services with which they are entrusted, this Nagoo made free with the pay of the men, and was always creating, instead of settling disputes. Nagoo was anxious to enlist in his master's corps as many simpletons as he could, "because," he observed, "your writers and readers foment quarrels, and know too much ; so that one cannot act as one chooses by them." No sooner did he hear my name announced (which seemed very high-sounding) than he summoned me to him. I had carefully predetermined to appear ignorant of reading and writing, because I feared that, by making myself useful, I might be detained in the fort, either in the treasury or arsenal. The before-mentioned disposition of Nagoo, of which I had been acquainted, induced me to adopt this course. I followed his messenger, meditating all the way how I could, most advantageously to my own objects, affect the numskull.

It struck me that I might stumble upon some one of my former acquaintance in the person of Nagoo, and I begged the messenger, in a careless manner, to give me some idea of his person—this I said in the most careless way. The messenger told me he was a Mahratta. I asked if he was tall or short; and found he was a very short man. “Fair?” I asked, with no little perturbation. “Yes, fair.” “And not much hair?” “Not much,” replied the messenger. “Light eyes?” “Very light.” “Pray, is there a doctor in the fort?” “Oh yes!” “Do send him to me, then, for (pressing my hand on my stomach) I have the cholera morbus coming upon me so bad, that I fear I shall die.” So saying, I leaned against the wall, and off went the messenger for the doctor. What would I not have given in the interval to have been out of the fort, that I might have escaped meeting Nagoo or the doctor! From the description, I apprehended Nagoo was the short man whom I had immured in the cave; and, from my knowledge of doctors, I had reason to apprehend little less than actual torture.

The doctor soon came, attended by a boy carrying medicines, and what he called instruments. These, in reality, were only an iron salamander and a keen knife. He ordered me to be taken to the hospital. An attendant lifted me up, and flung me across his shoulders as a butcher does a sheep. I was thus hurried across the fort to the hospital, a long building, without a single comfort of any kind. It sent forth the most disgusting effluvia I ever

experienced. This horrid place, with the way in which I had been carried, my head hanging down in the midst of the burning sun, added to the expected torment from the doctor, was very likely to bring on the disease I had only pretended had affected me. I now considered also that an interview with Nagoo would ultimately be unavoidable ; and I began to repent very bitterly my feigning sickness. I was first flung down upon a wooden bench, with a violence that, had cholera really been on me, would have relieved the doctor from further trouble. A dreadfully nauseous mixture was next poured down my throat through a horn. No mortal was ever before so dozed : they poured on and on, as if they were filling a cask. Of course, they no sooner withdrew the horn, than the most terrible nausea caused me to eject its contents again. Then they poured away, and the same result was attained. The doctor shook his head sagaciously, and declared that he had never seen, in the whole course of his practice, so obstinate a case of cholera. The violence of the retching was so excessive, that, completely worn out, I closed my eyes almost in a state of insensibility. I was soon aroused from my rest by feeling the most excruciating pains over the stomach, proceeding from the doctor's infernal salamander, red hot, drawn over my irritated and half-exhausted stomach, with as little concern on the part of the operator, as a farrier would feel when he was branding a horse. I roared with pain ; and, being vexed and maddened at what I had undergone, and

enraged at the ignorance of the doctor, I sprang up, and seized him by the throat. I verily believe he would have tortured no more patients, had he not received assistance from the attendants in the hospital. I was now bound down to the bench by cords, and pronounced mad. Cold water was flung upon me, and barbers ordered in to shave my head, while the doctor prepared his salamander once more to inflict fresh tortures, by applying it to my head—a very judicious method of curing madness !*

How bitterly I repented the deception I had practised ! The short man whom I feared could not have tortured me more than this accursed doctor, whom I heard boasting of the skill, with which he had treated my cholera ; though, owing to my impatience, I had brought on a temporary insanity, which, Ishwur being favourable, his salamander would speedily remove. His assistant at this moment whispered in his ear something, which I supposed was a proposal to await a little time, and see how the disease turned ; the doctor seemed rather unwilling to assent, and I was left for an hour undisturbed. At the expiration of that time the doctor returned, and I endeavoured to convince the idiot of my sanity, by saying to him, " Ah, doctor ! but for your profound skill, I must have died ! I am relieved from the horrors of the cholera ! Can I ever be grateful enough to you for it !" This flattery I thought would be

* Hot irons are substituted in the place of blisters, by the eastern native practitioners.

grateful to the fool—all fools love it—and I did not think wrong: He ordered me to be set at liberty immediately. I never forgave myself for using flattery to this fellow, except by reasoning that it, perhaps, saved my life. I am certain, indeed, that I could not have survived his cruel treatment much longer; and yet this consideration will frequently, when I think of the time I was under his hands, hardly make me justifiable in my own eyes for the adoption of it.

As soon as I could do so, I set off towards the guard-room or chowkee ; but, near the door of the hospital, I saw the messenger of Nagoo the deputy. "Come," said he, "as your cholera and your madness are now over, Nagoo will be happy to see you." I said that it was late in the day, and I had had neither food nor rest. I urged the man to postpone the audience until the morning, or obtain Nagoo's consent so to do. He replied that he dare as soon propose delay to a tiger. "What!" I exclaimed; "is the deputy so fierce a fellow?"—"Indeed he is," answered the man; "and he has met with something very unpleasant lately, which has terribly ruffled his temper." This was almost sufficient to convince me that Nagoo was, after all, the man I feared ; and that his recent incarceration in the chamber of the cave was the cause of his present irritation. I followed the messenger like a criminal going to the tree: every limb trembled as I approached the residence of the tyrant. There was just light enough to discover the features of some one in the room ; and what was my joy at beholding, not the

mysterious short man whom I feared, but a perfect stranger to my eyes !

“Come hither, fellow !” was the first address of the self-important deputy. “So you have had a touch of cholera, I understand?”—“I have,” I replied; “and but for your learned doctor, I must have died.”—“Well, we could have spared you, I suppose; we have dunces enough in this place : to have lost a scholar would have sadly grieved us !” It was fortunate I knew the real character of Nagoo, and his views in so addressing me ; for any one who was not in the secret would have fallen into the trap laid for him, and have boasted of his learning. “I wish I could read and write,” I replied; “for then I should not be under the necessity of carrying a match-lock.”—“Then you don’t read, eh? but you wish to learn, do you?”—“Not I, now,” was my answer; “I am too old to begin.”—“Perhaps it is as well you should remain in ignorance ; you will find you can do better than a scholar. A soldier does not need a head to understand : ears to hear orders, eyes to see an enemy, and hands to fight him, are all he wants. What is the cause of a war to him ? he must fight, be it right or wrong.” Nagoo then asked if I should like to be employed outside or inside the fort? Of course I chose the outside service ; giving as my reason, that there was greater pay and more variety in that service. “And greater risk, too,” said Nagoo. I replied I could fight ; and as to risk, I ran no greater than my comrades. He then said I might draw upon him for

my pay whenever I wanted it; and that he would advance any moderate sum for me, and draw my pay monthly himself. I thanked him, though I would have been gladly excused this kindness, as I could get my money through the regular channel; for I saw Nagoo intended to cheat me, and involve me in pecuniary obligations. I then took my leave.

I next proceeded to the guard-room, where the havildar demanded what he called tobacco-money—customary when a recruit entered the garrison. This demand I paid. Soon after, sundry other fees were required of me on different pretences, which I was obliged to give my consent to pay at some future period, not having a rupee left in my possession. I was exceedingly angry with myself for allowing my fears to master my judgment as I had done, and for submitting to be blistered and physicked when there was no occasion for it. Though the description of Nagoo did correspond with that of the short man I had immured, and whose fate involved me in a horrid uncertainty; yet, had my fears allowed me time to reflect, I must have felt that Nagoo and the short man could not have been the same person; because I had been employed to gain admittance to the fort, which neither of my employers was daring enough to attempt. Moreover, had the short man been the jummahdar's deputy, he would have been, of all others, the best calculated, from his situation, to have liberated Sagoonah and her aunt. Some apology, however, I may claim, when

the manner in which I left the men at the cave is considered and what would have been the result of their finding me should they, by any chance, have escaped death, and have fallen in with me.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN the fort, I met, as might be expected, with Fuzl Khan, with whom I claimed acquaintance. He was astonished at seeing me there; and I longed to hear his adventures, and how he escaped from the Pindarees and fell into the hands of the English sepoys. Having got leave of absence for a few hours, to go to the town below the hill, we entered a liquor-shop, where Fuzl Khan told me that the Pindarees, having been defeated and driven in every direction, he, with difficulty, got away. I then asked after Mahadeo. Fuzl said he was a pious Pindaree—heart and soul in the cause—and that he had kept a very sharp look-out after the new comers; that he grew enraged beyond bounds, when he found that Nanna and myself had fled; and, suspecting that Fuzl Khan would do the same, he narrowly watched until he put spurs to his horse, and then fired his pistol at him; but the ball passed over his shoulder, and left him untouched. What his fate was afterwards, Fuzl could not tell, but concluded he fell in the general massacre that followed; for, as he had since heard, the whole horde was neatly cut to pieces. I was disappointed in being thus left in

a state of uncertainty respecting the son of the pretender to the Satarah throne ; though I took care not to let Fuzl Khan know the cause of my anxiety respecting him. Fuzl had fallen in with a havildar's party of the regiment of sepoys from which he had deserted, and being recognised, was instantly seized ; but Scindea's soldiers had taken the whole party, and rescued him, and finally brought them to the fort, where he was released by the killehdar, and taken into Scindea's service, in which he was happy in calling me comrade.

Fuzl was still the same sort of fellow as before. He indulged in repeated glasses until the fumes got into his head, and then the events of his former life all crowded upon him. He imitated the rage of the old cazee, who had eaten the dog's-tail soup ; then he would turn grave and play over again his old agonies at losing his money, falling upon me as if I had been the boy who won it from him a teki beki ; next he would laugh heartily, and cry out, "grind ! fry ! fry ! grind !" as if his father and mother were actually present, and carrying on their old altercations, as he had detailed them in the fort of the Pindarees : all this ended in Fuzl falling down insensible. I left him at the liquor-shop and returned to the fort, where I learned that Nagoo had been inquiring after me. I thought it my duty to proceed immediately to his house, and I was instantly admitted. He seemed pleased to observe my ready attention to his wishes ; and beckoning me to him, said, "Pandoo, I have work for you, can you be ,secret?"—

“ Speak,” said I, “ and behold your slave.”— So you all say,” rejoined Nagoo ; “ but you must keep my secret as close as the oyster does the pearl.”—“ I will keep it closer,” I replied ; “ for the pearl is often, by the indefatigable fishermen of Ceylon, wrested from its innermost cell. From me, neither artifice nor violence shall wrest your secret.” He was greatly pleased at this speech, and even condescended to present me with betel-nut and paun-leaf. Calling me into an inner apartment, and desiring me to sit down, he began by saying, “ Pandoo, there is a woman”—(oh, how my heart beat !)—“ there is a woman on whom I have bestowed thousands of rupees in golden ornaments.” This woman I thought must be Sagoonah. “ Sagoonah !” I exclaimed, completely forgetting myself. “ No, no,” said he, “ her name is not Sagoonah ; but no matter—this woman is my wife.” What a cruel disappointment for me ! “ Yes, my wife ; why do you stare so ? is it wonderful I should have a wife ? ”—“ Oh no,” I replied ; “ but it seems strange you should want to get rid of her.”—“ No, no, Pandoo, I did not say anything of the kind ; I only repent having given her so many ornaments, and I want to get them back again—that’s all I mean : there is nothing strange in that, you know.”—“ No, but why not demand them of her ? ” This, he said, would look shabby, and he should be laughed at ; he wanted to get them all back, and not let her know who it was had them. This is not shabby at all, I thought to myself. The narrow-minded wretch then told me he had

a plan in his head which might succeed for doing this : that she was going a short journey, and would take her ornaments and money with her ; I was to enact the robber, and strip her of all her gold and jewels to the last grain, and bring them to him, and I should be well rewarded. I promised obedience, though secretly determined to disobey. Nagoo told me, that though obedience was my duty, he would merely wish that I should act as his friend in the present affair, because it was one of secrecy, and strictly confidential. This I admitted ; but still I requested a companion or two, because a robbery such as he requested was seldom performed by a single individual. Nagoo hereupon observed, that he had no intention of trusting me alone—that he had a young man devoted to his interest, and he designed he should accompany me.

Having finished his nefarious business, as he thought, in the most advantageous manner for gaining his object, he arose and issued some orders to a servant who waited without ; and in a short time this able assistant made his appearance in the person of my friend, Fuzl Khan, scarcely recovered from the effects of his yesterday's debauch, though doing the best he could to conceal them from observation. "Come hither," said Nagoo.—"Ram, Ram, M̄ha,raj," replied Fuzl Khan, bowing to the earth, and nearly falling on his nose. "Why, how now, friend !" exclaimed Nagoo, "that was indeed a low bow : what is the matter with you ?"—"Oh, my lord, I have—I mean, I am delighted with your

summons, and cannot contain my joy."—"Well, then, here is a young man," pointing to me, "who pants for employment, and also for a clever companion, and I know no one more able than yourself to effect the object I have in view."

Here Fuzl Khan exhibited enthusiastic joy, and bowed again, until his nose almost came in contact with the earth.

Nagoo then whispered to Fuzl his base plan respecting his wife; and Fuzl, who did not, it was evident, comprehend a single syllable of the conversation addressed to him, once more made his extravagant salaam. Our employer first whispering to me, bade me keep a strong check upon Fuzl Khan's conduct; and then whispered to him, no doubt, nearly the same thing respecting me. We were next furnished with passports to carry us from the fort and through the town. Nagoo told us that his wife would set out on the following evening, and we took leave. When we were fairly out of the house, Fuzl Khan came close to me, and asked what the old fool had been talking about all the time we had been with him. I told him he was about to seize his enemy's wife. Fuzl Khan observed, he had heard something said about a wife, and inquired if he did not also talk about her ornaments. I replied, that he said she would be an ornament to the fort, as she was very beautiful. Fuzl Khan then reeled home to his lodgings, and I walked to mine.

At this time I lodged at the dwelling of an old camel-driver, and expected I might gain some valuable information from him respecting Sagoonah and her aunt. The old fellow had

appeared very cautious, and only answered my distant questions by a surly grunt, something like that of one of his own camels. I ventured to say I had met with an old goatherd, who had informed me that the women had come to his cottage in the glen. I thought this piece of information might have drawn out the old fellow, and made him communicative ; still he replied only by his usual grunt, nor did it seem possible to render him conversable upon any point. Being heartily tired, I went to my mat immediately on my return from Nagoo. Just as I had fallen asleep, I was suddenly awakened by hearing a number of voices near me ; and the old camel-driver entered my apartment, accompanied by several soldiers, who desired me to get up and follow them. I turned to mine host and asked an explanation of this unlooked-for affair ; the only reply I could obtain was the old rascal's usual grunt. I made up my mind, therefore, to go with the soldiers, as resistance was fruitless. They took me to the killehdar of the fort, who told me he had sent for me in consequence of hearing from the camel-driver that I could give positive information respecting the two females who had escaped from thence. I was aghast at being questioned so suddenly on the subject, and assured the killehdar that he had been misinformed ; that if I could give him any information, I should be happy to do so. I related what the goatherd had told me, from which the killedhar was not an atom the wiser, and I was dismissed with an half-angry, half-disappointed look. On returning to

my lodgings, I passed a bastion of the fort, where I heard persons conversing hard by. The moon broke forth just at the moment from behind a dense cloud, and I distinctly saw two men on the spot whence the voices proceeded. Determined to listen to what they said, as it seemed that something of more importance than usual must have brought them together at such an hour and in such a place, it being close to a lonely tower, I turned back, and reached the rampart over their heads by a circuitous route. I was soon within hearing of them again. One seemed to be in a great passion, whilst the other laboured to soothe and tranquillise him. "Who could have fastened the door?" said the more irritable of the two. "That I know not," replied the other; "but I found it so, and on opening it"—"Well, well, you told me that before, why repeat it?"—"It is useless, it is true, to do so; but I have no doubt Kokoo will re-appear, though the other will never see the light again."—"But are you sure it was he?"—"It is impossible I can be certain; but the place is known only to those two persons, and one is a corpse."—"And a corpse shall he be who deprived me of his services."—"Who," said the other, "was it that left him there?"—"I know but one fellow, he who thwarts all my actions—Pandurang Hàri."—"Indeed! why then he is in your power; he is at present a soldier of this garrison."—"Of this garrison!" said the other with surprise; "you deceive me: let me be certain of this ere I rest."—"It is very certain, for I swear I saw him but yesterday at Nagoo's

house ; but how can you tell that it was Pandurang who locked the secret door?"—"It is no matter whether he did it or not—he is my enemy, and stands in my way, and must"—Here the voice died into a whisper, and I could hear no more. What was my agitation and alarm, however, at discovering that one of the two was Gabbage Goulsa, for it was almost impossible to mistake his voice. This fortunate discovery enabled me to prepare for my safety. I went home to bed, and called Fuzl Khan very early, desiring him to accompany me, without loss of time, in pursuit of Nagoo's wife. He got ready immediately, and I quitted the fort, much to my gratification. It formed no part of my plan to suffer Fuzl Khan to aid in rifling the deputy's wife, nor in allowing him to see I did not rob her. On our way, we passed near the liquor-shop where Fuzl Khan had before been, and I took care to purchase two bottles of arrack and carry with us. As soon as we entered the jungle leading to the goatherd's glen, I feigned fatigue, and sat down under a tree. I then produced the liquor; of which Fuzl Khan had no more objection to partake than I had to give, and he soon began to talk and laugh as usual. At length he fell down insensible, and I was left to my own reflections. My first was, how it would be practicable for me to escape Gabbage; the next, how I should explain to Nagoo's wife the nefarious scheme of her husband, and yet not make him my mortal enemy. At length, I was obliged to leave the matter to chance, and quietly await the approach of the

ensuing evening. It was sunset when Fuzl Khan awoke, quite recovered from the effects of the arrack, which I had given him too early in the day. He was almost as sober as if he had taken nothing, and perfectly recollected, to my disappointment, that we were to make a woman prisoner. Finding it impossible to quiet him, I was obliged to offer him fifteen rupees to act exactly as I should direct, and assure him there would be no risk in deceiving Nagoo. He objected, however, that he should get only fifteen rupees, and I should make perhaps five hundred; for, of course, he supposed I meant to rob the woman of her ornaments, and he should expect half of whatever was taken. I assured him he should have half of whatever I took from her, and this pacified him. We now pushed on our way, determined to await the coming of the woman on the other side of the second jungle, not far from the fatal cavern in which the secret chamber was situated.

We reached a spot near the entrance of the cave, and soon heard the sound of a tattoo's feet, and the gingle of bullock's bells. It was, as I expected, Nagoo's wife and attendant. Notwithstanding my entreaties to Fuzl Khan to keep quiet when we came up with her, he rushed upon her, and began to threaten her, draw his sword, and swear. He then seized the gold ornaments on her neck with a savage eagerness, of which I had not before supposed him to be capable. I saw it was high time I should interfere, and coming up with my sword in hand, I told him to desist, or I would sever his

head from his body. The poor woman shed tears of gratitude, and threw herself at my feet. I raised her up and restored her ornaments. Among the hair was some braided up with silver wire. This singular ornament struck me immediately, and I determined to inquire the means by which it came into her possession. At present there was no time for this. I therefore begged her to be composed, and offered to conduct her to a place of rest. I led her into the cavern, followed by Fuzl Khan, whom I represented as my servant, and for whose ruffian-like treatment of her I made many apologies. The gloom of the cave did not permit me to behold the face of the lady; but her voice was exceedingly melodious and sweet, so much so I felt that the lips that uttered them must be beautiful. Having spread a mat in a retired corner, I called her attendant, who followed her on a bullock, and bade him cook some rice and pay her every attention. I found the old rascal, to my great surprise, whispering with Fuzl Khan. By this time I had concluded he had been bought over by Nagoo, and that the conduct of Fuzl Khan was no more than he had expected; besides I observed he had kept aloof and never offered his assistance. This circumstance alone was sufficient to prove to me that the fellow was a villain in league with his master. The whispering I have mentioned continued until I went up to them with my sword in my hand, and declared if they touched the person of the lady, or approached her with a hostile intention, I would run them both through the body.

To my amazement Fuzl Khan turned round and demanded who I was that pretended to dictate them ; called me a traitor for promising to serve my master Nagoo, and then to thwart him as much as lay in my power. "What, villain !" cried I, "would you rob a defenceless female?"—"You are wonderfully considerate," he replied ; "what else are we come all this way about? what reward shall we get for not robbing her?"—"The reward of a quiet conscience," I answered. Fuzl Khan and the old attendant upon this burst into a loud fit of laughing ; and the former at last said, "By Allah and the holy Imam, those trinkets shall be mine," pointing at the same time to the ornaments of the terrified woman, who sat in inexpressible terror. I then told Fuzl Khan, he must first pass me, and I put myself in an attitude of defence. He did not lack courage, though he never showed it but in a bad cause, and drawing his sword he made a lunge at me, which I parried with difficulty. It was so dark we could scarcely see each other, and before we had made more than two or three passes, the attendant came into the cave with a lighted torch which he held up on high. We fought desperately, and the old villain taking advantage of my being fully occupied, stuck his torch in a fissure of the rock on one side the cavern, and falling on the woman, began to plunder her. I did not hesitate a moment, but, leaving my antagonist, rushed on the old miscreant, and with one blow felled him to the ground. Fuzl Khan returned the compliment by cutting me over the shoulder; fortun-

ately it was the left, and he did not thereby disable my sword-arm. Furious with pain and anger, I turned upon him and cut him over the wrist of the right arm. His weapon fell to the ground, and I made him beg for mercy, which he did without delay. I tied his hands behind his back and proceeded to pacify the lady, who was screaming dreadfully. Having done this, I turned over the body of her old attendant, whom I had well punished for his villainy in attempting to rob his mistress. He was a corpse ; not a pulse in his body beat ; his jaw was fixed, and death was in his countenance ; in short, he was past all power of doing ill again in this world. I felt no remorse for what I had done ; for how could I take to heart the exit from the world of such a treacherous wretch even though it was by my own hand ?

Fuzl Khan lay groaning with pain, as he well might ; for I found that, in my hurry, I had placed the rope which tied his arms, in the wound which he had received from my sword. I now removed the cord, and then began to think of the state of my own wound. Nagoo's wife applied water and bandages, and dressed it in the best way it could be done under existing circumstances. I next took the torch and approached the secret chamber-door which was behind the idol. The bolt was drawn back, by which it was clear some one had visited the place. I attempted to open it without success, until I remembered there was a secret spring, which I searched for minutely in vain. I despaired of obtain-

ing an entrance, and returned to search for some instrument whereby I might force the portal, though it was very unlikely I should find one. I was obliged to break off the bough of a tree hard by, which cost me some labour, and I returned and battered the small door with it as violently as I could. It remained immovable until I had nigh given up the attempt; when most likely a fortunate blow touched the secret spring; the door flew open, and, grasping the torch, I entered the cell, from whence a most noisome stench proceeded, which, however unpleasant in itself, was grateful to me, when it convinced me that my enemies were no more. Still anxious to have ocular demonstration of the fact, I entered, but saw the mouldering body of only one person; it was that of the tall man: the body of his companion was nowhere to be seen. How could the short man possibly have escaped? I asked myself a hundred times; and how could the tall man have remained behind? who liberated him? I could discover no hole in the roof, floor, or sides of the chamber, so that the door must have been the place of escape. To ruminate long was useless: I was glad to leave this chamber of death, and just as I came to the door, what was my surprise at seeing a man's hand on the bolt, in the very act of closing it, and thus consigning me to the doom to which I had left others. The horror of my situation came upon me in a moment, and I thrust the blazing torch on the hand that was thus ready to seal my destruction. The pain made the fingers let go their hold; and throwing open the

door, who should stand before me in the cavern but Fuzl Khan ! He it was, indeed, who had so nearly sealed up my life, for ever. He had freed himself from his bonds, and having watched my motions, very cunningly hit upon the expedient of locking me in the chamber, and thus of having everything his own way. He saw that the plunder of the female must be his own. The pain he suffered from the burning torch was more than equal to that from the cut of my sword on his other arm. He groaned bitterly with his sufferings, and I was about to inflict instant death upon him, when he cried and prayed so hard for mercy, that I contented myself with again binding him, and, for greater security, fastening him to the idol's leg. Leaving him there to his meditations, I sought the poor woman, who could hardly yet believe herself secure. I succeeded in tranquillising her mind, and then proceeded to dispose of the body of the old man whom I had slain. About this there could not be much difficulty : and lifting up the torch in one hand, I proceeded to drag it to the secret chamber by the leg with the other ; where, before I safely bestowed it, I examined afresh the cords with which I had bound Fuzl Khan. I then entered the cell, and placed the body by that which lay decaying, and closed up the portal.

On approaching the woman, I entered into conversation with her, and she requested me to accompany her to the end of her journey. This I could not undertake to do ; but I informed her of the plot which had been got up

against her, in a quarter from which she had little right to expect such an attempt to be made. I told her that the object was solely the ornaments which she carried about with her, and I advised her to be upon her guard for the future, as some stratagem would no doubt again be had recourse to for a purpose similar to the present. I now took an opportunity of remarking to her the singular trinket to which I have before alluded: I begged her to allow me to see it. She immediately complied; and, on examination, I found the workmanship delicate and handsome, having six silver knobs very conspicuous upon it. I begged to know how she obtained the ornament, and she informed me it was a present from a female with whom she became acquainted in the fort of Asseerghur. "Poor creature," said she, "she was a prisoner there, and had no friend but me." Her name I eagerly asked, and she replied it was Sagoonah. How I felt at the hearing that name again, and in having tidings of her so lately! "You did, indeed, befriend her then?" said I, "and have now tenfold reason to thank heaven for having enabled me to befriend you—to serve one who has showed kindness to her, who is so dear to me!"—"You then are no doubt the Pandurang Härì of whom I have heard her speak." I replied that I was, and would give worlds, did I possess them, to know where I should again meet with her; but that I began to fear she had forgotten me. "Very far from it," said the wife of Nagoo; "that hair entwined with silver, was studded as

you see with six knobs, intended to denote the six happy months she spent with you at Kandeish, in peace and comfort." Upon hearing this, I pressed the precious relic to my lips and kissed it with rapture. I was so pleased, that Nagoo's wife begged my acceptance of it, and I with eagerness took it and deposited it next my heart.

I learned that both Sagoonah and her aunt had been very cruelly treated when in the fort ; that they were nearly starved, and had no clothes save an old blanket each : that she herself taking compassion on them, had sent them food and clothing, the latter of which, she since learned, had never reached them, having been intercepted or stolen by those who guarded them. At length she obtained permission to visit them, and having compassion on their misfortunes, aided them in effecting their escape. When I inquired if she knew whither they were gone, she told me it was doubtful, though she had good reasons to imagine they had taken the road to Guzerat, as they felt certain that tranquillity nowhere awaited them in the Deccan. I next inquired if she knew to what part of Guzerat they intended to go, and she said she thought to Baroda, but that it was not their intention to remain there long. She, moreover, said that, as they had no means by which to live, they purposed to procure work if possible as a means of subsistence.

This was indeed opportune and valuable information. Guzerat was indeed an enormous distance ; but what was distance in the way of true love ? Nagoo's wife now begged

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CHAPTER XXII.

ON my return to the cavern I was met by Fuzl Khan; who had been eagerly looking out expecting my arrival. He informed me he had been witness to a most singular scene since my departure—a scene that would astonish me. I begged him immediately to make me acquainted with the particulars. Feeling weak and exhausted, he said that he retired to a remote corner of the cavern, and lay down to try and obtain the best repose his wounds would allow him. He had scarcely closed his eyes, when he heard a gruff, coarse voice say, "It is impossible, you must have deceived me."—"I swear," answered a second voice, "I did not deceive you; I liberated Kokoo myself, and left him weak and faint in the cavern awaiting your arrival."—"Well, well," said the first, "I can see for myself." Both then proceeded to the little door leading into the secret chamber; "and I suppose," said Fuzl Khan, "they entered it immediately; but they soon came out. One was in a violent rage, and said to the other, 'You are a vile liar, you have deceived me; how should both bodies be at this moment, rotting in the chamber if what you say be true? Did not

you tell me you saw but one, and that you yourself liberated Kokoo?' The other man replied he knew not what to say, but that if they found Kokoo where he had left him he hoped conviction would follow. 'Show me the fellow then,' said the first speaker. They both now proceeded towards the corner of the cavern where I lay. There was little or no light in that part, but still there was enough to discover a human figure reclining upon a mat. "'Tis well,' said one of the men; 'he sleeps; but how came there to be two bodies in the chamber?' This was a difficulty they could neither of them solve. The man who appeared to be superior, then came up to me and cried out, 'What, ho! Kokoo! asleep while there is so much work abroad? Awake! thou lazy varlet. Come, come, the birds are flown towards Guzerat; be quick and follow them.'

"It may be easily imagined that I lay in no very pleasant state of feeling. I did not dare to confess I was not Kokoo, nor could I give any satisfactory account of myself, or how I came there. The man shook me by the arm, and cried out, 'Come, Kokoo; surely thou art not as dead as thy friend!' I started as if from a sound sleep, not wishing them to believe I had overheard any part of their conversation. 'Who in the name of Ishwur have we here?' said one of the fellows; 'bring me a torch!' One was lighted, and they held it close to my face. 'Why, you miserable, half-starved, Musselman dog!' cried one who was in the garb of a gossein; 'where did you come from? and where is

Kokoo?'—‘Who is Kokoo? I don’t know anything of a person so named. I never heard of the man you ask for before.’—‘Come, come, my friend,’ said one of the men; ‘you must not feign ignorance; I left him here, and now I find you in his place.’ The gossein then got into a violent rage, and began to accuse his companion of having deceived him. A violent altercation ensued, which ended in the gossein stabbing the other man in the side, after which he went away, muttering curses and imprecations upon him. I have been very anxiously waiting your arrival,” continued Fuzl Khan, “as my situation was not a very agreeable one. I wonder who this Kokoo is?” I replied that I believed he was the devil, for it seemed impossible to get the upper-hand of him. I described his person to Fuzl Khan, and told him to be on his guard, and give me immediate intelligence should he ever chance to fall in with him. He promised me obedience in everything, but did not fail to remind me of the one hundred rupees I had promised him.

I desired him to accompany me immediately, and took my way towards the tree where I had buried the silver ornaments. It was necessary to go through the glen where the goatherd’s cottage was situated; and before we reached it the darkness of evening came upon us. As we passed the cottage I fancied I saw two men enter it. I had little doubt but one of them was Gabbage Gousla, while the other in all probability was Kokoo, whom he had somewhere fallen in with. If I could have depended upon Fuzl Khan,

I would not have hesitated an instant in entering the place and watching their motions. As I was circumstanced, I thought it better to pass on a little way, conceal myself, and watch, by which means I might learn something to my advantage. I desired Fuzl Khan to proceed, and await my coming at a place which was easily recognised. He instantly obeyed, and I continued in ambush, watching the door of the cottage, from whence the two men soon came out, taking the road to Asseerghur. They passed the tree near which I had concealed myself, and I could clearly hear Gabbage's rough voice cry out, "The old villain is fled, but I will ferret him out. Foiled in all my plans! I will not be so much longer. Curses on that Pandurang Härì, the sneaking rascal! It must have been he who locked you up in the cave. What idiots you were to let a stranger into our secrets!"—"It was all Salla's work," his companion answered, "not mine."—"Well," said Gabbage Gousla, "he has paid dearly enough for his rashness and folly. What we now have to do is"—

I could hear no more of the conversation of these men; but I was in great fear lest they might overtake Fuzl Khan, and, recognising him for the man whom they had left in the cavern, use him ill, or probably question him too closely, when he might inadvertently bring up my name as his fellow-traveller. I kept, therefore, as close as I could in their rear, only allowing them time to get a small advance of me in the road. I then proceeded towards the place where

I had appointed to meet Fuzl Khan. On arriving there I could not find him, and began to conjecture a thousand things, and to despair of doing so at all ; when, looking over the plain, I saw a man approaching me at a distance, seemingly in full speed. On his coming nearer I saw it was Fuzl, who told me he had been overtaken by two men, one of whom answered the description I had given him of Kokoo. He said they had very closely questioned him as to his business in the jungle, but had not recognised him as the slumberer in the cavern. Not knowing what reply to make to their questions, he told them he was about to join his master, Nagoo, in the fort. They asked him if he was acquainted with a person of the name of Pandurang Hāri ? He replied that he was, and said Pandurang was at present in the fort, where he had left him only the day before. Upon this the two men hurried on their way, muttering together. He heard them say, "This time he shall not escape!" Fuzl Khan immediately hastened to communicate the information to me. I then thanked him for the adroit way in which he had deceived the two men, and proceeded to the tree where I had buried my treasure. I thought it best, however, to await the dawning of day before I searched for it, and proposed to my companion to rest ourselves awhile. In the morning I went to the tree, and, digging, soon discovered, to my great joy, that the ornaments were all safe. I gave my companion the two silver bangles, with which he was highly pleased ; and by thus keeping my promise, I

attached him more strongly to my interests than I could have done by any other method, and I hoped to find him a useful person in pursuing my future objects.

I was strongly impelled, on a sudden recollection of what took place at the cavern during Fuzl Khan's absence, to return, and try if I could discover who it was had been the victim of Gabbage Gousla's revengeful passions. I therefore proposed it to Fuzl Khan, as there was reason to think the unfortunate man had not been killed, but only severely wounded, though there could be little doubt but his death was intended. My companion replied that he had seen quite enough of that dark and horrible place, and had no great inclination to set his foot in it again. I would not go alone, and Fuzl Khan seemed determined not to accompany me. At length I prevailed upon him to go as far as the entrance with me, and to leave me the task of looking for the wounded man. We set off, my companion being somewhat in a surly humour. We had the whole day before us, and there was nothing to be apprehended from thieves in the jungles, all of which we cleared in good time; so that a large portion of daylight remained after we had reached the cave. Fuzl Khan still determining not to enter the gloomy place, I went in, and groped in every corner a good while, but found nothing, and returned to my companion, who advised my lighting a torch, as so much of the cavern was impervious to the light of day. We had no torches with us, but we set fire to some sticks that afforded but a bad sub-

stitute for them ; and Fuzl described the place where the man had been stabbed, but refused to enter and assist me. I now recommenced my search, and was at the point of giving it up, when, my light being extinguished in a dark part of the cave, I stumbled over something which I soon found was a human body. Whether it was dead or alive I had no means of ascertaining. I called to my obstinate companion in vain, being determined to be satisfied. I therefore took the body by the leg, and drew it as gently as I could to the mouth of the cave, and, in so doing, fancied I heard a deep groan. This gave me hope that I might yet be of some assistance to the unhappy object of Gabbage's vengeance. On getting into the air I found that the wounded man was suffering more from loss of blood than the depth of his wound. The latter had, however, ceased bleeding, and we contrived to bind up the wounded side with the sufferer's turban. The air, and a mouthful or two of fresh water, seemed to revive him. He opened his eyes heavily, as if with effort, gazed vacantly around him, and then shut them again, seeming as if he was in some horrible dream. Fuzl Khan did not scruple to render every assistance in his power now we were outside the mouth of the cavern ; and by his care and my own united. we at last contrived to infuse a little more life into the object of our solicitude. Of speech he was not yet master ; sustenance and unremitting attention seemed indispensable to restore it to him. Where we then rested nothing could be pro-

cured ; and I proposed to Fuzl Khan that we should construct a litter, and lay him upon it, by which means we might convey him to some village, and obtain for him the necessaries, without which his recovery could hardly be calculated upon. My companion immediately assented to this proposition. We went to work, and, in a very little time, completed our task.

We lifted our patient on the litter, and slowly took the road towards Kandeish. The nearest village was that in which the durhm sallah was situated, where I first saw Gabbage Gousla's two men. We reached it before dark, and deposited our burthen there ; and while Fuzl Khan went in search of rice, milk, firewood, and other necessaries, I remained by the wounded man. Fuzl soon returning, a fire was made, and provisions cooked ; but, unfortunately, the object of our care could not raise his head, much less swallow food. We therefore covered him securely, and eat our own rice and milk, expecting to find him a corpse by the morning. The thought of this disappointment prevented my closing my eyes all night ; but my companion, whom nothing could ruffle, lay snoring in perfect oblivion of everything, and utterly indifferent as to who might live or die.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE following morning I heard, or fancied I heard, a rustling proceeding from the corner where the object of my care on the preceding day was reposing. I crept softly towards the place, the light not being yet sufficient to distinguish objects at a little distance, and, to my surprise, found the wounded man sitting upright. I lost not a moment in awaking Fuzl Khan, and desiring him to get a fire and warm some milk. He immediately attended to my first request, but hesitated about my second; when I discovered that he had drank all the milk the preceding night. This being the case, I despatched the greedy rascal for more. The wounded man seemed as if he wished to articulate; but I desired him to desist, lest the exertion should bring on a relapse and bad symptoms. I washed his face, arranged his hair; and, on the daylight coming full upon his countenance, being now cleaned from the dirt and soil of the floor of the cavern, what was my astonishment on recognising my old companion, Nanna, who had been Trimbuckje's servant, and was taken prisoner with myself by the Pindarees! I was now more than ever anxious for the return of his health and speech.

I longed to know how he could have become an instrument of Gabbage Gousla's. He did not seem to recognise me, nor could it, in his present deplorable state, be expected. On the return of Fuzl Khan with milk and provisions, I desired him to approach the wounded man, and see if he could not call his features to recollection. He replied he had seen the face before, but he did not recollect where or when. I reminded him of our being taken by the Pindarees, and that the present helpless object of our care was my companion at the time, and had been one of the audience when he, Fuzl Khan, told his own history in the ruined fortress. Fuzl observed how much he was changed, looking attentively at him, and thought it would be a miracle if he ever recovered. I had strong hopes of seeing him reinstated again. We washed his wound, and bound it afresh with the best cloth we could obtain. We gave him the warm milk, and soon found that these little offices contributed to benefit our patient, who by and by dropped into a profound slumber. I now went to the potail's house, and related to him the deplorable state of the wounded man, and how we had accidentally discovered him in the solitary cavern. I stated that, as the durhm sallah was a public place, I feared it was very ill calculated to afford him the quiet necessary in his situation. The potail offered me a room in his own house, and I very thankfully accepted it. When Nanna awoke, we lost not a moment in removing him thither. The potail placed him in a com-

fortable bed, and his wife promised to pay him every attention in her power. The truth is, we produced an impression of our consequence on the potail's mind much to our advantage. Fuzl Khan strutted about with his silver bangles, affecting an air of great importance ; and I thought it not amiss to wear some of my ornaments, all which made the potail judge it right to treat us with every attention and respect. The first day of his removal to the potail's, our patient did not utter a word, the effort seeming to be still far too great for him.

In the meanwhile, I found the potail a very communicative person, and well versed in public affairs. We entered upon politics and the state of the war. "Ah!" said he, "poor Badjerao is like a hunted hare. He never sleeps two nights in the same place. The very idea of the Toope Wallas being near him, makes him issue orders for marching ; so that his men, cattle, and elephants are jaded to death." I inquired where Trimbuckje then was. The potail called him a scoundrel, and wished he had been dead before the Peeshwa knew him, for to him he owed his downfall. "Downfall!" I inquired, with surprise ; "do you imagine him to be indeed ruined, and that all hope is past of his being reseated on the musnud of Poona?"—"He is ruined beyond redemption," said the potail. "Trimbuckje has deserted him, of course, and is anxious only for his own safety. Poona is wrested from the Peeshwa ; Scindea is defeated at Aheidpoor ; and Asseerghur is about to be

stormed. We must all now become ryots* of the Toope Wallas."—"We must then do the best we can," I replied ; "we shall find ourselves more peaceable, and they who will labour will have their reward. The thieves and turbulent will be kept quiet. We must submit to what we cannot avoid. The spear of the Pindaree will be changed into the ploughshare of the *coombie*."†—"This is very true," said the potail ; "but what is to become of our venerable Brahmins, and our men of rank? What will they say to lose their offices, and be circumscribed in their power? Their pensions, their profits, and *jageers*,‡ will be curtailed and regulated, if not taken away. The Toope Wallas may manage tolerably well as governors ; but the worst thing is, they will never allow any bellies but their own to be filled."

"—You potails, coolcunnies, &c., will no doubt, even under your new masters, contrive to reap tolerable harvests."—"It is true, we may for a year or two," said the potail ; "but after that time I fear the ryots will begin to lose their respect for our authority, and to comprehend that they can have their complaints attended to. Farewell, then, our ancient and established usages—our golden times of prosperity! There will be no farming out of districts then ; no agreeing with a coombie for half his produce, and getting three-fourths ; no fees ; no fines ; no bargaining with soucars and bankers, to keep the coombies eternally in their books. We must not flog them, and torture, after the manner of our

* Subjects.

† Cultivator.

‡ Grants of land.

fathers, those who are obnoxious to us. It will be a new state of things ; I think the oldest always best."—"I have learned," I replied, "that there are people who have other opinions upon those subjects ; but I confess I am not competent to enter into an argument upon them. I wish you success most heartily, my friend. May your undertakings flourish, and your country also !"

I had scarcely uttered these words, when an unusual bustle was heard in the village, and an hircarrah on a camel rode up to the potail's house, calling out, "The Peeshwa ! the Peeshwa ! Provisions, provisions ! or your heads shall answer !" The potail was in great consternation, and promised to do all in his power towards assisting the fugitive prince. A sumptuous palanquin, borne by eight bearers, who appeared ready to fall to the earth from fatigue, came up directly afterwards. The Peeshwa alighted from it, and rushed into the potail's house. He threw himself in despair upon the ground, wailing bitterly. How different from his appearance when I last saw him in his palace, surrounded by Brahmins and officers, train-bearers and courtiers, in all the insolence of power ! Then, indeed, I trembled in his presence. And well I might tremble, for I was assuming a character, the discovery of which would have annihilated me. Now I looked upon the once awful Peeshwa with pity and contempt, and thought how a little time since he strutted in his kinkobs and diamonds, like a gaudy peacock. He was deeply humbled, even to the very dust, watering

the cow-dunged floor of the potail's house with tears of repentance and distress. His few attendants, as miserable as himself, were worn out with long marching. They came, however, to his side, imploring him to arise and rouse his spirits, puffing up the valour of his troops, his own greatness, and whispering hopes that could never be realised. Badjerao then assumed the monarch once more. He arose, and issued some orders with a heavy heart. The camp lay without the village, and was well provided with rice and necessaries. The Peeshwa went through his ablutions, put on the silk vest in which he uniformly dined, and was monarch once more, until a courier galloped into the village, crying, "The Toope Wallas! the Toope Wallas!" Badjerao forgot his dinner, and bade his palanquin be off directly. His followers, unfed and unrefreshed, were obliged to resume their duties; and in half an hour the whole aswarry, with horse and foot soldiers, camels, elephants, and bullocks, were clear out of the village.

The potail came to me when they were gone, wearing a face of mirth, and well satisfied with himself. From this I judged that the Peeshwa had rewarded him for his trouble and provisions. I congratulated him, therefore, on his good fortune, asking him the amount of his present. "Present!" said he, "no, no, I have received no reward; that is a part of his business Badjerao never remembered in his life." I then observed it was fortunate the English were so near, as their approach had rid him of so many troublesome guests.

The potail smiled, and said, "The English are far enough off, my friend. This was all a contrivance of my own. I foresaw ruin to us all, when the runaways came to my village, if I suffered them to stay long; and instead of procuring a stock of provisions for so many hungry mouths, I sent a fellow a few coss off, with orders to ride into the village furiously just as the soldiers were eating their dinners, and give the alarm which you have heard. I knew the name of Toope Wallas would scare the poor Peeshwa out of our precincts, and set him flying again; and, considering the road he has taken, it is ten to one but he will fall in with them. He has gone towards Ashtee, to which I have heard the English are approaching. Did you ever see such a pusillanimous man calling himself a fighting king?" I observed he did not bear his misfortunes with either manly or kingly fortitude; and I inquired where Gokla, his great general, was. The potail said, "Gokla is a brave man, but must persuade his rabble followers to fight before he can do anything; and without a few thousands like himself, he can do nothing for the Peeshwa's fortunes. We shall soon hear of some battle; and rely upon this truth, it will be the last Badjerao's troops will ever fight." I could not but admire the potail's ingenuity in getting rid of so many hungry vagabonds, who never dreamed of remunerating him for the expenses they heaped upon him.

All being again quiet in the village, I visited my patient Nanna, and found he was mending fast, though still very

feeble and ill. He asked me where he was. I assured him in very good hands, and that he should be taken care of. He seemed sensible of the kindness shown him, and said he had nearly given up all hope of being restored to life. His wound was deep, and well aimed by the villain that gave it; but, when he next met him, he would convince him that there was another dagger more unerring. "This is my reward!" said Nanna. I desired him to be composed for the present, as he could give me an account of his disasters when he was better able to converse. He thanked me, and said he had but little to tell. "I served one villain," said he, "whom I deserted to follow a greater; and my wages have been a stab in the side, which but for your kind aid must have been my death. You shall find, however, that your kindness shall not be forgotten; for I swear to serve you, whoever you may be, provided you are not engaged in murder or other bad deeds, which I now from my very soul abhor." I assured him I was not engaged in any such schemes, and that possibly he might have it in his power to aid me materially. He squeezed my hand, and fell into a deep slumber. I left him, and, on going away, met Fuzl Khan, who said, "Who do you think I have met? Mahadeo, the first Pindaree, who is at this moment actually an officer in the Peeshwa's army." I asked him if he was certain of this. He replied he was; that he made himself known, and should have had more conversation with him but for the peremptory orders of the Peeshwa to march

without a moment's delay. This was very satisfactory intelligence to me ; because I felt certain Mahadeo was in the land of the living, and I knew where, though I had hoped he was no more.

The next time I visited Nanna was on the following morning. He had not yet appeared to remember me. Finding him much refreshed by sleep, I begged him to tell me the particulars of his history, as far as the time when he was left wounded in the cave. He accordingly began—" You have, no doubt, heard of such a man as Trimbuckje Danglia ?"—" I have," I replied ; " and know him to be a sad villain."—" He is indeed bad ; but there are even worse men than he—for instance, the fellow who wounded me in the cave. But to proceed. I served Trimbuckje Danglia."—" And so have I," was my observation. Nanna hereupon said, " Ah ! I know that voice ;—let me look full in your face. Thou art indeed Pandoo ! Didst thou but know how I have been hunting after thee to work thy destruction, thou wouldst not save my life !—But henceforth I am thine for ever ! Listen, then : Trimbuckje, although we aided him in his escape from Thannah, never gave us the stipulated reward. This I did not so much grieve about ; but he intrigued with my wife ; so that I became the laughing-stock of all his household. Full of indignation, I vowed revenge ; and he shall find I can remember my vow. In the moment of my highest rage, I was met by Gabbage Gousla, a hanger-on in Trimbuckje's train. I related all my

injuries to him. The watchful and cunning Gabbage blew the sparks of vengeance which lurked in my bosom into a flame. Listening to his artful incitements, I grasped the dagger which he wore, and half-presented to me, and swore I would plunge it into Trimbuckje's heart. Gabbage grinned a horrible smile of triumph, and bade me be sure of my blow. I was to meet him at a particular spot as soon after the murder as it was possible for me to reach it. I reiterated my promises of punctuality, and we separated. At the hour of twelve I ascended cautiously the narrow staircase leading to Trimbuckje's apartment. I opened his door, and entered the chamber. He slept soundly. My dagger was raised for the blow, when a noise in an adjoining chamber awoke my victim, who turned round just as my weapon descended upon his breast. The point only grazed his arm, upon which he awoke, and cried out for succour. I had not a moment to lose, but rushed down the staircase, and gained the street. I was soon joined by Gabbage Gousla, to whom I related my ill success. He bade me secrete myself in his house, and await until he could find out what steps would be pursued to apprehend the murderer. On the following day he told me I was suspected, and that persons were on the search for me. 'Save me ! save me !' I cried to Gabbage. That, he said, depended upon myself. 'Serve me, and I will save you,' said this arch-fiend. I inquired how I was to do this. Gabbage told me that he demanded my services; but if I failed to obey him, he

would give me up to the enraged Trimbuckje. I observed I was indeed in his power, and that if he spared me I would serve him. ‘Then,’ said he, ‘you must again grasp your dagger, and take care this time that it strike home.’ On asking whom I must strike, Gabbage told me Pandurang Hārī. I asked if he meant my old fellow-servant. ‘The same,’ growled the villain. ‘Go to the village of which Trimbuckje is master, and, at an uninhabited mansion near the great tank, you will meet with persons who will instruct you how to act. The least deceit or deviation from your duty will cost you your life! Come, disguise yourself!’ Having said this, he brought me the dress of a Jungum priest; and, being equipped in a perfect disguise, he sent me to the village before mentioned, where I arrived in safety. I found the house, and two ferocious-looking fellows in it. One was a very tall man, the other short and thick. They led me, by a secret passage, into a room on the ground-floor, the windows of which looked into a court-yard, and were very small. They soon proceeded to business, being well apprized of the orders which I had received from Gabbage. They told me I was fixed upon to murder you, because they themselves were ignorant of your person, and were besides too much engaged in other matters. These they communicated to me to be the apprehension of two women who were in custody at the fort of Asseerghur. Money was then given to me, and I was informed that you had actually been seen in the village that day, and in all pro-

bability would be at the collector's office on the following morning. A knock at the door of the room alarmed my companions, and one of them, the tall man before mentioned, went out by a secret passage, which led by a staircase to the upper rooms. He fired his pistol, but all was silent."—"I know that very well," I observed to Nanna; "and he very nearly saved you the trouble of using your dagger."—"Then it was you who knocked at the door?" continued Nanna. "It was, my friend," I replied. "Had my companions been aware of this, you would have been sacrificed to their vengeance," said Nanna. "I fear nothing could have preserved you. I would have tried to screen you from their fury; for my promise to obey Gabbage was only a subterfuge, by which I hoped to escape from immediate ruin, being, as I was, completely in his power. As I live, I would not have harmed you, nor, to save my own life, imbrue my hands in the blood of an innocent and unoffending man, who had, moreover, been my friend. As soon as we were convinced all was quiet, we separated. I was to dog you to a convenient place out of the village and murder you, my companions promising to meet me at Asseerghur, where I was afterwards to assist in liberating and carrying off the two women, that they might be delivered from the clutches of one tyrant to be thrown into the power of another. Gabbage himself was expected to meet us there, with proper persons, to whom the two women were to be given in charge. I was unable to find you in the

village, though I remained two days searching for you ; and I finally proceeded towards Asseerghur, as I was promised a reward by my employer, if I was faithful to his interests. At Asseerghur I saw you, just as you came from under the hands of the doctor. Before I could determine what step to take, Gabbage Gousla made his appearance. How he gained an entrance into the fort I cannot conjecture. I did not know whether he was aware of your being there also ; perhaps he might himself have seen you. I dared not conceal my knowledge of your being so near ; and, meeting him by appointment under one of the bastions, I informed him I had seen you, but that the fort was not the place to commit the deed in, and that I was determined to await his arrival. He grumbled his displeasure at my not having effectually prevented your appearance there at all ; and insinuated that I had either betrayed or neglected his interests. He dismissed me with an imprecation, but not before I had acquainted him with the fate of my two associates, whom, I should have told you, I met with again, in a very singular manner. Passing the cave which, but for you, would have proved my sepulchre, I heard the most piteous yells and cries, as if some dreadful crime was perpetrating. I entered, and distinctly heard sounds proceeding from behind the idol, then the fall of a heavy substance, and all was silent. Shortly after commenced a knocking, as if some one was endeavouring to get out. Cries and groans began again, and I approached close to where they seemed to issue

from, and, calling out aloud, asked what was the matter? ‘Oh, let me out!’ cried a faint voice; ‘I am famished!’ I withdrew the bolt, but the door would not open. The captive, whom I knew by this time to be Kokoo, instructed me to press one of the knobs under the bolt—which I did, and the door flew open. Kokoo rushed out, nearly overcome by weakness and hunger. I asked him where his companion was, and he told me his dagger had done the business for him. I shuddered at the coldness with which he related this. He explained the circumstances to me, which were matter of great astonishment, relative to the way in which he and his companion had been imprisoned by a fellow whom they had trusted with their secrets. Kokoo remained in the cave, being too weak to leave it; I proceeded to Asseerghur, and requested Gabbage’s immediate presence at the cave. Kokoo said that the scanty provisions they had in the chamber were soon expended between him and his companion, and that then they began to quarrel, and drew their daggers, and he, Kokoo, being quickest, thrust his into the tall man, who fell. Hereupon I hinted the possibility of his not being dead. Kokoo bade me go and see, if I pleased, but that neither man nor devil should ever tempt him to enter that infernal place again. I then went myself into the stone room, and found the man quite gone. Gabbage was pleased to learn that one of his vile instruments was living, and desired me to accompany him, and bring Kokoo to the fort, and afterwards to take

measures for putting you out of the way. On our arrival at the cavern, Kokoo was not to be found ; and, on going into the inner chamber, behind the idol, how was I surprised, to find two bodies in the place of one that I had left when I set out ! Gabbage was in a violent rage, and swore I had deceived him throughout. I begged him to search the cavern minutely ; and I thought we must meet with Kokoo, and thus it would be proved I was sincere. In the place where I had left Kokoo, we found another man, who had been somehow wounded. Here Gabbage lost all self-command, and stabbed me in the side ; then muttering imprecations over me, took his departure. In the state in which I was left, you found me ; and to your exertions I owe my present renovation to light and life."

I now informed Nanna that I had immured the two slaves of Gabbage in the chamber. On hearing this, he applauded me for my promptness, and regretted that he had been the instrument of effecting the liberation of the most formidable villain of the two. I then told him that the man he found in Kokoo's place was Fuzl Khan, the second Pindaree, whose tale had so amused us in the ruined fortress. Nanna wished immediately to see him, and Fuzl Khan came. Nanna immediately began to thank him for lending his assistance in preserving him. Fuzl candidly confessed he did not merit them ; for the horrors of the cavern were so strongly impressed upon his mind, that he would not venture in again, and refused to accompany me. I told Nanna that his wound

was partly owing to me, as I had placed the other dead body in the chamber, and related what had taken place to induce me to do so. We were both struck with the wonderful coincidences which had again brought us together, and at the recollection of the events which had occurred since we met before.

Among the other questions which I put to Nanna in our various conversations, while he was in a convalescent state, I asked if he knew why Gabbage sought my life? He told me that Gabbage was aware of my affection for Sagoonah; but that, while I lived, he could scarcely hope to accomplish his purposes, whatever they were. Nanna said he was ignorant of the objects of Gabbage; but that, since he had been at Satarah, he was more than ever desirous of destroying me. Upon expressing my wonder at his hearing anything at Satarah that could affect me, Nanna said he did not know what; but I ought, he thought, to keep out of his way. I knew this was not an easy thing to do, for he was everywhere in an incredibly short space of time; and that were I to change my name, walk naked, or be clothed like a sultan, he would unerringly recognise me. Nanna remarked, however, that, except Kokoo, all his agents were ignorant of my person; but that Kokoo must remember me as long as he lived, and be incited to find me out, to revenge my having locked him in the chamber, besides the motive of the wages promised by his iniquitous employer; these were strong inducements to a man so bloodthirsty to hunt me

down. I told Nanna that I intended to go to Guzerat. He immediately said that our meeting Kokoo there would be certain, as he was going after the women, who had fled thither. I observed that he could not be of much use there, as he did not know Sagoonah's person ; but Nanna contradicted me, and stated that he was one of the persons employed to murder her. I now informed Nanna of all that had taken place at Poona, and of my adventures as a magician ; of my taking Sagoonah under my protection, and the subsequent incidents I had met with, at which he was astonished. He could hardly believe I was the person who had caused so much noise there in my disguise, and ruined Habeshee Kotwall.

There was one thing for which I could never account in my own mind, and that was, the reason that induced Gabbage Gousla at first to seek the destruction of Sagoonah, and afterwards to try to preserve her life. This Nanna cleared up to a certain extent by desiring me to recollect, that when Gabbage sought to assassinate her he was in the interest of Trimbuckje Danglia, and had no knowledge who or what the girl was. He was fully aware of the imposition practised upon the Peeshwa relative to the pretended guilt of Habeshee Kotwall, as he was in the confidence of Trimbuckje. He also guessed (knowing the affair of the girl) that the pretended magician must have obtained his knowledge from some authentic source. The girl had escaped his clutches, but she might somehow or other have fallen into those of the magician. I found from Nanna that I

was very closely watched, and traced to a village about a coss from Poona. On receiving the report of his spy, Gabbage himself repaired to the village, and returning in great perturbation, set out immediately for Safarah, from whence he quickly returned, and gave orders that the girl at the cultivator's cottage should be seized. It was discovered that she had fled, and his rage knew no bounds. All the information that could be obtained was, that she had taken the road to Seroor. Little was said before Trimbuckje's servant, whom Gabbage had employed as his spy, because he wished Trimbuckje to imagine Sagoonah really dead. A person was despatched after the fugitive, but Nanna never heard the result of the pursuit.

This result I told him, and also how narrowly Sagoonah and her aunt had escaped. On expressing my wonder that Gabbage, with all his art and his numerous agents, had never yet succeeded in entrapping Sagoonah, Nanna said it might be accounted for by Trimbuckje's servant, who had acted as a spy in watching me, having informed his master that the girl was living, and that Gabbage had some particular views respecting her. Trimbuckje seized a favourable moment to quarrel with Gabbage, not allowing him to know how well informed he was regarding Sagoonah's existence. They separated, and Gabbage then discovered that Trimbuckje was aware the girl was alive,—for he found all his craft and cunning opposed by Trimbuckje's power,—and that, although the latter was a prisoner in Thannah, his

influence in Kandeish was such, that measures were taken at that very time to seize the girl and her aunt. I was summoned away to attend Trimbuckje immediately, not for the value of my services, but that I might thwart Trimbuckje's scheme ; for he had begun to think me a very shrewd kind of fellow, and clearly saw that I had advanced my own ends, and made a tool of him first, by getting away Sagoonah from him, and in the second place a situation and reward. He retaliated, however, by condescending to affect a particular predilection for me, and I in return planned his escape from Thannah, which, when effected, he not only failed to be grateful for, but sent expresses to Kandeish to deprive me of my place.

In this way things, until now unaccountable to me, were cleared up. I recollect the warning of danger given me by a soldier at the guard-room in Kandeish, and that after this I went to the deserted mansion, where I was so near being shot. Nanna could not inform me how it was that Gabbage and Trimbuckje became reconciled to each other, but supposed, being both involved in schemes of villany, it was not worth while for them to counteract each other any longer. It appeared that the sun of Trimbuckje's power was for ever set, and the Peeshwa crushed, past all hope of again governing. Gabbage, therefore, had latterly found it no longer his interest to adhere either to one or the other, and having nothing to fear from their power, relied at present upon his own cunning and a few hirelings, ready

instruments of his designs, to get Sagoonah into his hands. "You," said Nanna, "are one great obstacle in his way, and you he is determined to remove. Kokoo is his head assassin, and he it was who cut to pieces the Shastree from Guzerat. This shameful murder was planned by the Peeshwa himself, aided by Trimbuckje, and executed by Kokoo." I could not help observing, here, how unfortunate for me Nanna's arrival at the cave, and the release of Kokoo, had proved. "It proved also very unfortunate for me," said Nanna; "where he went I cannot guess, but had he remained where he proposed, I should not have been wounded, and been brought to the brink of the grave." I asked if there was no way to escape the villain's fury, in case I fell in with him. Nanna seemed to think a bribe would have done it, had I not drawn the fatal bolt upon him, but that no money would purchase his good-will under present circumstances. He advised me to go well armed, and be very circumspect in my movements at all times; that if I went to Guzerat, or remained in the Deccan, he would be there also. I asked Nanna if he would accompany me thither, and told him my design was to get into some employment, the profits of which I would share equally with him and Fuzl Khan, and we should then be better able to provide for our mutual security. Besides, Nanna might obtain some place in the service of the English Government, and thus we should live in quiet. Nanna promised never to desert me, as I had preserved

his life. He considered himself bound to do what he could for me ; and we agreed to go well armed, and never to be farther apart from each other than we could possibly avoid. This would be some security against Kokoo and his employer, whose open attacks were least to be feared. Fuزل Khan swore to be faithful to us, and to travel with us wherever we might direct our steps ; and we promised, in return for his sharing our hazards, that he should partake in our comforts. He possessed animal courage, and though his honesty was not the most pure of its kind, and his youthful propensities still had a fast hold upon him, we had no reason to think he would turn out a traitor to our cause. I now felt my mind more at ease than it had lately been, and anticipated a joyful interview with my Sagoonah.

On consideration, it appeared dangerous for us to remain much longer where we then rested. Gabbage was too near us, and I recollect that his son Mahadeo was also at hand. They might chance to meet, and unite their forces against us. I deemed it prudent to keep my knowledge of the real designs of Gabbage to myself, and to seem ignorant of his views towards the musnud of Satarah, because the remotest chance of a man being in power secures to him money and followers. After all, Nanna was a Mahratta, and it is a peculiarity in the character of this people, that the hope of being provided for, even at a future time, operates very strongly upon their minds, though I had no reason to think such would be the case with Nanna. As

to Fuzl Khan, I knew he would set off in a moment, on the shadow of such a hope.

On inquiring for my friend the potail, I found him busily employed in indemnifying himself for the losses he had sustained by the passage of the Peeshwa's army through his village. He was screwing the cultivators and villagers to the last pice ; taking money from one, cattle from another, and had actually in pawn the wives of two poor fellows at once, while the husbands were endeavouring to borrow money to satisfy his rapacity. It was not my business to interfere, though I with difficulty beheld the scene unmoved. I informed my host that we intended to quit him immediately, and begged him to furnish us with a tattoo to carry the wounded man. He did so very readily, and I paid for it with some of my silver ornaments, presenting him with an ankle-chain as a remuneration for his hospitality. Fuzl Khan, who was possessed of great ingenuity, told the potail, on setting out, that he had better take good care of his money, as he had overheard a plot to deprive him of it. He described to him very accurately the persons of Gabbage Gousla and Kokoo, as the conspirators. This he did to prevent the potail giving them any information as to our movements, should they come to question him about us. Knowing their persons, he would naturally refuse to admit them under his roof, and they would go away just as wise as they came. I highly approved Fuzl Khan's trick,

and we set off, intending to take the short way to Guzerat through the Kandeish jungles.

Our first stage was to Trimbuckje's once flourishing village, where I had held a situation, and where stood the house in which Sagoonah had resided, which was now inhabited by soldiers and all classes of people. We alighted at a durhm sallah, where several horsemen were assembled. These were in the service of the English, and were conversing very freely on the affairs in which they were engaged. We soon found that they were in search of Trimbuckje, and that considerable rewards were offered to any one who would give information whereby he might be apprehended. Upon finding this to be the case, Nanna called me aside, and said, "Now is my time for revenge; I know where Trimbuckje is concealed, and I will unkennel him from his hole, and take good care he knows who it is that ruins him."—"Are you certain?" I asked him in return. "Can you be sure of pointing out the place?" He assured me he could, but that he was not yet strong enough, and would wish to enjoy another night's rest before he accompanied the Toope Wallas to the place. He remarked that if he gave information that night, the English would not rest until he delivered the villain up to them. At this moment the public crier came by, offering a reward of five thousand rupees to any person who would bring information to the English resident at Kandeish where Trimbuckje

Danglia might be found. Nanna, confident the secret was in his own bosom alone, apprehended no danger by waiting until the morning. We eat our supper, threw ourselves upon our mats, and enjoyed a sound repose.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE next morning, Nanna, being refreshed by an unbroken sleep, called me over where he was lying, and told me he was determined to proceed immediately to the tent of the English Resident, and demand an audience. He had reflected upon the step which he proposed to take, and found his resolution rather strengthened than weakened, in consequence of what had presented itself to his mind upon the subject. It appeared to me highly necessary that he should first ascertain whether Trimbuckje was actually at that moment in the hiding-place he suspected, as otherwise we should appear in a very ridiculous light before the English commandant. This I stated to Nanna, who, being of the same opinion, proposed he should start alone towards the place where we suspected our enemy was concealed ; and I promised to await his return at a particular spot, which I indicated to him. He departed accordingly, and promised to be with me again before nightfall. During Nanna's absence, I strolled with Fuzl Khan into the neighbourhood of the village, and seeing the English horse formed in a line, and an officer examining the horses and accoutre-

ments, whom I had seen at Bombay, I approached pretty close, and found him to be the man whom I supposed at this time to be the husband of Jane Bebee. He did not seem to recollect me, and I was not very anxious to attract his notice. He had since become a cavalry officer, and I have no doubt was a very active one.

In the evening Nanna came back, and told me Trimbuckje was in his secret abode. He made sure of this, because he had watched several men into the building, of whose faces he had a perfect recollection; and he thought, from the preparations and bustle he observed, that matters were arranging for his removal. This being the case, not a moment was to be lost; and we proceeded to the tent of the English Resident, and obtained an audience. I desired Nanna to enter, awaiting myself the result of the conference on the outside. He very soon came back, and the Resident immediately began to issue orders. The cavalry officer was sent for, and a second came with him. After a short conversation, they went away, and quickly returned at the head of two hundred men, accompanied by *mussalchees* or torch-bearers. Nanna was mounted, and desired to lead the way. We followed him across ravines and broken ground, until we came to an ancient stone building in a ruinous state, and thatched with straw. Nanna now advised that half the men should dismount, and that twenty of them should endeavour to obtain an entrance, by a way he would point out, into the courtyard of the place. The officers declared if he

played any tricks with them, he should be shot through the head on the spot. Nanna vowed fidelity, and led the way. Not a torch was yet lighted, though care was taken to be ready to do so at the moment the word was given for the purpose. We passed through a cow-shed, the wall of which, being of mud, was broken down in a moment. We were now in the yard, where we heard the bells of bullocks jingling, a sign that the inhabitants of the place were upon the point of decamping. Proceeding straight forwards, we came up to an elephant, whose keepers were fast asleep. The sagacious animal, aware of strangers being near him, rattled his chains and set up a tremendous yell, which awoke his keepers, and gave the first alarm to the inmates of the place. The torches were now lit up at once, and the consternation of the inhabitants at the blaze may be easily anticipated. Some of Trimbuckje's men resisted our advance, and an obstinate battle ensued, which ended in their speedy destruction; others, throwing open the great doors, attempted to fly, but were cut off and killed by the English horse stationed without. Still no Trimbuckje made his appearance. Nanna then led the way to the interior of the building, where we found the wives of Trimbuckje, and many other females, all of whom begged for mercy, which was extended to them. They swore, however, on being questioned, that Trimbuckje had departed from them two days before. We were not to be so easily deceived. Nanna still led on, through passages and dark rooms, until we came

to an iron door, which was forced open ; but Trimbuckje could not be found. Nanna himself was now at a loss, but we determined on searching every hole and chamber ; and, ascending a small narrow staircase leading to a tower, we were opposed by a single man armed with a spear, who prevented our going higher. Sounds were heard from above, as if some one was attempting to break through the wall, and we had no doubt it was Trimbuckje himself. The English officer got impatient, for every knock seemed as if it brought the object of our search nearer to freedom. The spear, however, effectually prevented our ascending, and it was so rapidly thrust down and drawn back again, that we could only see the hand that guided it at considerable intervals. At length one of the troopers rushed forwards, and received the point of the weapon in his breast. The man who held it having some difficulty in extracting it speedily from the trooper whom he had transfixed, exposed his person to the view of one of the English officers, who discharged his pistol at him, and he fell dead instantly. The trooper having been removed out of the way, we were enabled to push forward into a stone-room above, where we could see nothing but straw upon the floor, with several heaps of charcoal and firewood. Not doubting but some one lay concealed there, the officers gave orders to set fire to the straw, upon which a groan was heard from under it, and the once formidable Trimbuckje Danglia made his appearance. Finding that resistance was vain, he quietly

surrendered himself. Nanna was the nearest person to him when taken, and cried out, "Trimbuckje, I am avenged—if you ever again climb into power, make your dependants your friends, and not your enemies!" The fallen man spoke not a word in reply, but suffered himself to be led down the staircase. Having joined the troops without, we went back to the village by torch-light, and reported our success to the English Resident, who considered Nanna fully entitled to the reward offered for Trimbuckje's apprehension.

I hinted to Nanna my fears that, now he was so enriched, he would leave me to journey alone to Guzerat. He appeared to feel hurt at my surmise, and said that I mistook his character greatly. Part of his reward he received down; the remainder he left in the hands of the Resident, which he begged to be allowed to draw for by a bill of exchange from Guzerat, or elsewhere. He was fixed in accompanying me still, because I had saved his life, and he had promised to serve me in return; and also out of regard to his own safety, for he could not deem himself secure in the Deccan, especially when it was known that he had betrayed Trimbuckje to the English. This man had many adherents, and his wife would very probably urge them on to revenge. All that Nanna required me to do, was to carry some of his rupees that he meant should be expended for our mutual benefit. I could not help expressing my admiration of his conduct to this noble-spirited fellow, and declaring that I had never

set my eyes on a fellow-being before, who would act so kindly towards me. Trimbuckje little knew the value of the dependant he had ungratefully requited. "None of your flattery, Pandoo," cried Nanna. "Mahrattas use it when they are most bent upon mischief; and if you continue in this strain, I shall fear you are plotting something against me.—Enough of this. Now, as to our companion Fuzl Khan; you remember his own history of himself, and the depravity he makes no bones of displaying. His inclination seems naturally bent upon grasping what was not his own. Do you think we can safely trust him?" I answered that I feared he was an incorrigible fellow, and I had never seen him exhibit signs of amendment; but were we to dismiss him at that place, I was well aware, from his disposition, I should bitterly repent the step. I proposed taking him with us to Guzerat, his own country, where, being once more arrived, he would not evince a desire to return to the Deccan; the company of his Mohammedan friends would so occupy him, that he would quickly cease to be anxious for ours.

I could not help asking Nanna what had made him thus suddenly think of Fuzl Khan. He told me that on returning to the place where we put up the preceding night, he found Fuzl Khan busily ransacking his bag. He might have saved himself that trouble, as it appeared there was nothing in it, being as empty as when first made. I could not help admitting that he was an incurable knave, and

hoping that he would not be quite as familiar with our bags on the road we were going. "I shall take good care of mine," said Nanna, "for I will not leave it in his power! I abhor such pitiful practices; and if I were to catch him doing so, he should suffer for it. If we were enemies, and he sought to overreach us that he might ruin us the more certainly, one might call him a clever fellow; but to filch from companions and friends is contemptible!" The conversation ended by our both agreeing to keep a sharp lookout after his conduct.

In the morning we set out, giving Fuzl Khan to understand that Nanna only was purse-bearer, and that we had but little in the bag. "Little!" ejaculated Fuzl Khan; "come, that will not do for me. You forget I heard the reward cried for the discovery of Trimbuckje; and you have not received it? Not that I can claim any part of it; but to tell me you have got but little, that won't do, my friend."—"Why, Fuzl," said Nanna, "do you suppose I would carry five thousand rupees through the Kandeish jungles?"—"No," he replied, "I am not such a fool as that either; but I may fairly conjure you have a thousand at least, between you both."—"Curse the fellow," said Nanna, "he is a conjuror in reality; well, I call one thousand rupees little enough."—"Do you, indeed?" said Fuzl Khan; "I do not. That's all—a thousand rupees!"—"Listen, my friend," said Nanna; "whether we have one or five thousand, you will make yourself content. We shall give you your rice,

and pay your travelling-expenses, and no more. By Ishwar if I discover you peering into my bags again, I will run you through the body!"—"I peer into your bags!" said Fuzl Khan, as if surprised—"I attempt to rob any one! By Allah and the twelve Imaums, it is false! It is true I looked into your bag; but it was only in search of a mouse, which I saw take shelter among your things. My rice having been devoured by these vermin, I determined on catching the first I saw. Me a thief, indeed! Recollect, I am one of the faithful—*Allah howul!*"* We could not help laughing at the rogue's ridiculous subterfuge about the mouse. Nanna observed, "What you have told us, Fuzl, may be very true, but recollect, the next time a mouse runs into my bag, he is safe under my protection; and you will, therefore, await my presence before you molest him."—"By all means," answered Fuzl Khan, "as it is your wish. I have no desire to be rat-catcher to the party."—"Your actions belie your speech, however," observed Nanna; "but remember that in travelling with us as our friend, let neither mouse nor rat tempt you to become our enemy, or you shall repent it!" Fuzl Khan made no reply, and we proceeded on our journey.

The only circumstance which gave me any regret on quitting the Deccan, was the not having time to gain any information respecting the goatherd of the glen, to whom I determined to write, under cover, to Shewdhut Wanee,

* God forbid!

informing him I had gone to Guzerat ; but that, previous to my departure, I had learned nothing of importance to communicate to him. The first place of any note we arrived at on our journey was Nasik, from whence I despatched my letter to Indore. I trusted it to a soucar of Nasik, who promised to forward it by his own messenger. In passing through the jungles, Nanna was obliged to hire a palanquin and bearers, the fatigue being otherwise too great for him. We heard at Nasik that Badjerao had fallen in with a part of the English troops at Ashtee, and not being able to escape fighting this time, a desperate battle took place, in which his general, Gokla, was killed. Badjerao, taking advantage of the confusion, as usual, decamped, closely followed by his enemies. His name was detested by the Brahmins of Nasik, as being both weak, wicked, and cowardly. Every one was glad he was defeated ; but all were sorry the English were the conquerors. The capture of Trimbuckje Danglia was also known, and had given universal satisfaction.

Everything being arranged for continuing our march, and having hired tattoos and bearers (the latter not much relishing the passage through the jungles), we set out. The bearers grumbled, and seemed to feel real alarm lest the fever should attack and carry them off on their route ; no one, according to them, had ever escaped it, and it was going into certain destruction. They asserted, also, that the jungles were haunted by Bheels and tigers, and that if we valued our lives we had better not venture into them. We

were deaf to all their remonstrances. On our journey, and during the very first evening, Fuzl Khan began to be alarmed, mistaking the trees for Bheels, and every solitary bush for a tiger. The first day neither Bheel, fever, nor tiger arrested our progress ; the second was also free from interruption, and in one day more we should have cleared this dangerous tract of country. We were congratulating ourselves in the evening at our good fortune in having got through them, or very nearly so, when we were surrounded by Bheels armed with bows and arrows, who began at once to rifle us of everything we possessed, making us all prisoners together, lest we should inform against them to the authorities at Guzerat. Nanna parted with his money very reluctantly. Fuzl Khan, who had nothing to lose, met his fate with the most cheerfulness. The palanquin-bearers were escorted back to Nasik by the Bheels, while we were conducted to the haunts of these remorseless robbers. Why they detained us so long, and took us with them, I cannot tell, unless they imagined Nanna to be a person of rank, for whom they might obtain a ransom. Our arms were tied behind us, and we were led through the thickest part of the jungle, across ravines, and down precipices, through bog and water, until we came to a cave of extraordinary size. There one of the Bheels gave a loud whistle, and lights were seen emerging as if from the centre of the earth. A trap-door had been raised, and two tall, black men appeared, to whom we were given in charge, and by whom

we were thrust through the door with brutal violence, and led down stone steps to a second door, which opened into a long, damp passage. "Surely," I exclaimed to Nanna, "they mean to bury us alive in this dismal hole!" Neither Nanna nor Fuzl Khan uttered a syllable in reply, terror had so overpowered all their faculties. We proceeded until we came to a second passage branching off from the main one to the right hand. Into this last we went about twenty yards, when a strong door being opened on one side of it, they forced us into a dark and damp cell, and shutting the door, left us to our reflections.

We had been in the cell about an hour, when a man opened the door, and thrust in to us some dried grain and plantains, which we eagerly devoured. Water was also given us, of which neither Nanna nor myself could partake, not knowing who might have drank out of the pot containing it. We passed a most miserable night, anxiously hoping that the coming day would restore us the blessing of liberty, for more we could not expect. The prison door was opened early in the morning, and we were told to arise and follow our gaoler. We readily complied, and were conducted through the narrow passages, and up the stairs leading to the trap-door. At length we found ourselves in the cavern, in which twenty Bheels were assembled, before the chief of whom we were led. He called to us, and bade us approach, and we obeyed. "Well, how like you your prison? What think you of our caverns above and below?"

What, silent ! They are to be your apartments until death release you, without you furnish us with another thousand rupees ; you may then proceed, promising not to reveal our retreat." We assured the chief we had no more money, as he must know that we were only poor travellers. "Very poor indeed !" said the chief ; "only a palanquin and a thousand rupees ! Not much like poverty either !" Nanna then confessed that he had rendered the English a service, and that this money was his reward. "What was the service ?" inquired the Bheel. Nanna, not knowing whether Trimbuckje was not a friend to the band, was at a loss what answer to make, until, risking everything, he let out the real secret. "So, then, your reward was five times greater than we discovered about your person ? Down with the other four thousand, or you return to the dungeon !" Nanna said he had not got it with him. "You did not throw it away ?" said the other ; "you know where it is to be had ?"—"No," Nanna rejoined ; "it is in the hand of the English Resident, to be drawn by bill."—"Well, then, you must give me a bill for it, made in my favour, my good friend, before you stir a step from hence." This was a sad blow to us all ; but our lives were dearer than the treasure, and they would have been sacrificed had we refused. "This is but just," said the chief ; "for Trimbuckje would have been under our protection, which we agreed to afford him for five thousand rupees ; and as you prevented our getting it from him, we must get it from you. Ho ! bring

paper, pens, and ink. You, prisoner, frame your draft in favour of Gondia Bendage Punumchund, at sight, and I will myself be the bearer." Nanna drew the draft, and demanded to be released. "Not so fast," said the other; "you must await my return. All you have been telling me may be false; and then how foolish shall I be not to find you here on my return! No, you must remain; but it shall not be in your dungeon below, but in this apartment; and be careful how you attempt to escape."

I now supplicated the chief that I might be allowed to prosecute my journey, having nothing to do with the money-transaction. After some consultation my request was granted, on promising not to betray the Bheels to any Europeans in Guzerat. The chief now led us to comfortable chambers, not, however, remarkable for over-cleanliness. Some papers lay about on the ground, and he sat down to finish a letter. When he had done, he gave a loud whistle; an attendant answered the call, and he inquired if Sumboo was returned. A reply in the negative made him seem angry and he petulantly thrust his papers into a box in the corner of the room, the lid of which he closed with great violence, crying, "When the tardy scoundrel comes back, tell him his delay may be attended with serious consequences. Yet stay! I will await his return." He then paused, and, reflecting a little time, said, turning to Nanna, "When does the English Resident leave Kandeish?"—"I believe immediately," replied Nanna. He then desired that two Bheels

might get ready to accompany him, and that if Sumboo arrived while he was absent, he should not stir from the cavern until he, the chief, came back. He next gave orders or our being strictly guarded. I reminded him of his promise to myself that I should depart. He replied, "True: you may go; and the next time you pass this way, bring no money with you." I bowed in silence, and he quitted the cavern.

When we were left to ourselves, Nanna reproached me for being so anxious to depart, leaving him behind. "My dear friend," I said to him; "who knows what may happen, if I go away? It is possible I may be of material benefit to you, though it is hardly probable that such will be the case. I deemed it prudent to secure the chief's consent to my departure for this reason; but if you don't agree in my views, I will most readily remain with you, and await the result." Nanna, convinced I had no intention of deserting him, or acting unkindly towards him, began to consider how our temporary disunion might be conducive of mutual benefit. All that we could arrange was, that I should prepare some place for him at Baroda. As this was not of sufficient moment for causing a separation, the arrangement was cancelled, unless some accident should eventually render it necessary to put it in practice. This evening we enjoyed the privilege of cooking our own rice, and drawing water in our own pots, from the cavern well. The room we occupied being quite dry and comfortable, compared with that in which

we had passed the preceding night, we enjoyed a sound sleep.

Early on the following morning I awoke, my fellow-prisoners being still asleep, and not knowing what to do for amusement until they joined me, I employed myself in examining the room in which I was, and everything around it. There was nothing worth notice, except the box in which I had seen the Bheel fling his papers. It was of very curious workmanship, apparently formed out of the root of some species of tree, of a very hard wood. I tried the lid, which, to my great surprise, I found unfastened. The inside was lined with iron. The papers very naturally attracted my chief attention. These I set about examining ; but they were very difficult to decipher, being ill-written, in a most barbarous kind of Mahratta. They contained nothing of any interest to me in my present circumstances ; and I was about to close the box again, when the newly-penned letter of the Bheel chief caught my eye. It seemed written with great care, and I contrived to decipher it without much difficulty. Its contents were as follow :—

“ To his highness, the all-powerful Guicowar, lord and sovereign of Guzerat, Mulharia Bheel sends his faithful brother, Sumboo, to the throne of excellence, claiming from thence the promised reward for services performed by the Bheels, whose words are sacred. For this purpose, Mulharia Naique begs his highness to consider his promises and the Bheel's

services, and give to his trusty servant and relative the sum of six thousand rupees, as agreed upon by his highness. On failure, Mulharia Naique promises his highness not a village in his dominions shall enjoy quiet for a single week together. The enraged Bheels are already dissatisfied at the money not having been paid them through the two messengers which have been already sent to demand the same. No bills will be taken ; the ready money is demanded, and if not sent, will be collected by force from the villages in Guzerat.

(Signed) "MULHARIA BHEEL NAIQUE."

Upon the perusal of this insolent letter, a thought struck me which might be productive of great advantage to us. As I was to have my liberty, could I not take it with me, and, on my arrival at Baroda, personate Sumboo, and gain the rupees myself? I communicated this scheme to Nanna as soon as he awoke and Fuzl Khan could be got out of hearing. Nanna was as cunning as myself, and suggested the same plan, before I opened mine, as soon as he read the letter. Our only fear was lest the chieftain on his return should discover the loss of the letter before Nanna could get clear off. It struck me it would be better to copy the letter ; but, on reflection, this did not appear safe, as it was evident this was not the first application of the kind, and the difference in the hand-writing would be very readily seen. Nanna agreeing with me in this, we arranged that he should not lose a moment in quitting the cave, as soon as the chieftain would grant

him liberty. It was very natural to suppose that the Bheel would call for his rice after his journey; so that Nanna would be out of his reach long before the loss of the letter could be discovered. I folded it up, and directed it, imitating the writing in the inside as well as I could. Not finding any gum to close it with in the room, I determined, to do that at Surat, which was the first place I should arrive at in journeying. I made a hearty meal, and then reminded the Bheels of the permission given me by their chief to depart. They demurred, and made a good deal of difficulty about it; but at length I succeeded. Before my departure, I had another conference with Nanna regarding the place of our meeting. This was to be at a durhm sallah known to Fuzl Khan, who directed me how to find it; and calculating the time which the Bheel chief might take in going and returning, and the time necessary to be consumed in travelling to Baroda, we hoped to meet on the sixth day from our separation. I cautioned Nanna against inquiring for me in Baroda, in case I might not succeed; for his inquiries would only show the people he was connected with me, and might involve him in difficulty. I gave the same caution to Fuzl Khan, who was instructed to search for me, but on no account to describe my person, or ask any one about me. The next thing was how to dispose of the money, in case we should obtain it; and it was agreed I should deposit it with a banker at Baroda, giving him one per cent. for taking care of it.

I now set out and reached the opening of the cavern, when it struck me that the person of Sumboo might be known at Baroda. I wished to consult Nanna upon this point, but the Bheels would not let me go back. "Well, Pandoo," thought I to myself, "you must rely upon your own wits should any suspicion alight upon you." I was now in a hideous jungle, alone, and opposed to the two powerful enemies of man—tigers and fever, and with only a little raw rice and grain in my bag. How could I reasonably expect a fortunate issue to my business? or rather, how could I, at present, make certain of my life? In respect to Nanna and Fuzl Khan, I gave up every hope of again effecting a junction with them, or even beholding them any more! and how slight was my chance of ever seeing Sagoonah again! Thus, uneasy in mind and body, I continued to follow the track towards the main road, from which the path to the cavern of the Bheels deviated. With some difficulty I found the right track, and, to my indescribable joy, cleared the jungles before night came on. A vast plain lay before me, and before complete darkness set in, it was quite impossible to guess the way before me. It appeared my wisest plan to remain in the place I then was until morning; yet the heavy dews alarmed me, especially as I was hourly expecting an attack of fever, which, if it did not carry me off, might retard the objects I had in view, or delay me so long, that I should not dare to show myself in the character of a Bheel demanding money

It was likely Sumboo would have anticipated me, in which case detection would be certain. I went on, therefore, right or wrong, leaving it to day to discover which. A light soon appeared ; it was a most welcome sight. I proceeded at a double rate towards it. I made no doubt it was a hut, where I might find shelter ; but was sadly disappointed to discover I was on the banks of a river, and that the light proceeded from the dying embers of a funeral-pile, some corpse having been just burned, according to custom.

I approached nearer the spot, and something close to the fire attracted my attention ; it appeared dark, and almost shapeless. Presently I saw it move. "What can it be, that, at such an hour, hovers round the ashes of the dead?" I eagerly called out. A hoarse and hollow voice cried, "Who speaks?" It was a female, and I went up to her, saying, "Why, good woman, what can bring you here, at this hour, to watch the dead?" She replied, "To watch the dead!" concluding with a sort of laugh ; "watch the wood, you mean!"—"What, wretched creature! art thou stealing from the dead?" I exclaimed ; for I perceived by this time that she was a low-caste Dheeria, who make a practice of picking up the half-burned pieces of wood from funeral-piles, and carrying them home to their own fireplaces for domestic uses, even cooking their victuals with them. "Rob ! no ; I rob not the dead ! The corpse has done with the wood now. Here is all that remains," said she, holding up the skull ; "wood won't burn that!" Here the old creature

went on raking the wood together, which she tied up in a coarse cloth. "It is a rare time for us now; the cholera morbus has sent me wood from twenty funeral-piles! I have collected a stock that will last me a good time." Disgusted with the hag's remarks, I begged her to tell me where I was, and how far from any village. "Follow me!" she exclaimed, kindling a torch at the almost expired flame; "follow me, and I will show thee." I obeyed her, and soon saw the lights of a large village, where, on my arrival, she directed me to a durhm sallah, into which I entered with a pleasure I cannot describe. I ate my dried grain, and some rice which I cooked, and, laying myself down, soon fell into a profound slumber.

CHAPTER XXV.

I AROSE early on the following morning, and attended to make pùja to a deity hard by, where I found a number of persons assembled for the same purpose. Being a stranger, the eyes of all the inhabitants of the village present were directed towards me, and more than one of them was exceedingly anxious that I should give some account of myself. I refrained, however, from satisfying their curiosity, and they suffered me to return to the durhm sallah unmolested. I there inquired the way to Surat, and was little pleased to find that I could not travel thither in less than two days. Not intimidated by the intelligence, and firm to my object, I set out with a good resolution, and had not gone far when I overtook several bullocks with their drivers, employed in the conveyance of grain, and found, like myself, they were bound to Surat. These drivers very readily gave me permission to accompany them; and as we proceeded we grew more friendly, until one of them offered me a seat upon his beast, and thus saved me many a weary footstep. I reached Surat about the time I expected; and, contrary to my former custom among bullock-drivers, met with no adventure on the road.

Surat was crowded with ships and vessels of all kinds. I found it a great place of traffic, and frequented by most of the merchants of the East, as well as the West; rich, populous, and busy. I took the first opportunity of examining the city, as I had never before been within the walls. It bore the remains of its former grandeur, though the principal streets, or what had once been so, in the Moghul Serai, were narrow and exceedingly dirty. This was the first time I had ever been in a city the inhabitants of which were principally Musselmen. The filth of these people around their habitations struck me very forcibly, and made me thankful I was among the followers of Brahma.

After rambling in the Moghul Serai, I entered the common bazaar, which is on the outside of the old city wall. The misery, dirt, and stench I encountered there was the most disgusting sight my eyes ever beheld. Kabob frying (which recalled Fuzl Khan's mother to my recollection) was carrying on in every corner. The numbers of old women roasting and frying, polluting the very atmosphere with their abominations, would almost exceed belief. The meat at the butchers'-stalls, the bread at the bakers', the very sweetmeats, were covered with impurities. The men were one-half of them drunk, though, as Mohammedans, they were forbidden strong liquors—so much for their imperfect obedience to an imperfect religion! How far more exalted and sincere are the followers of Brahma! The women were bold, carried themselves coarsely, and

seemed to be all slatterns. Quarrelling was heard from morning till night in every corner of the place, and the followers of the Faithful in Surat appeared to me the vilest class of men I had ever sojourned amongst. The English, to whom it belonged, seemed either incapable of enforcing cleanliness by their authority, or had given the object up as a hopeless task. Leaving the bazaar, I saw not far off a large building, which they informed me was the jail, and that it was only just erected. The adawlut, or court-house was close by, and again recalled Fuzl Khan, and his troubles there, to my recollection. The judge was considered, on the whole, to be a fair sample of the profession everywhere, having his prejudices and sympathies as well as other men. Woe to those, however, who fell under his dislike, and still more under the hatred of a vagabond Parsee in authority beneath him, but a much greater man than his master. By superlative cunning and hypocrisy, this Parsee had the good fortune to persuade men that he was as truly honourable and just as he appeared. He had filled several situations in all branches of the service—in the revenue, justice, customs, police, and commerce. With his long experience in so many departments, and without the inclination, who could be more honest? The English were either aware of this, or in ignorance of the character which really belonged to the fellow—the reader must decide which of the two was really the case. During my residence here, this obsequious and artful knave gave a grand *nauich*,

or dance, to which the heads of the different departments were invited. The use of these invitations was, not to pay a compliment to the English, which they were silly enough to imagine, but designed to add to his own importance by the presence of the strangers, which fully compensated for the expense incurred in their company, as they seldom remained more than half-an-hour. The influence acquired in consequence, was used in facilitating the extortion of money from the inhabitants, or in evading the payment of their just debts. In either case, who would dare grumble, when the judge himself was the intimate friend of the party against whom complaint was to be made? The judge came to his dance, eat his sweetmeats and conserves, praised his children, and returned his embrace. Would any one be fool enough to complain against him? Such was the result of the feeling in the place; and whether the reasoning was false or true, the poor people dared not run the risk of making the attempt. Thus, as usual, the great ends of justice were defeated by the means taken to dispense it.

I remained no longer at Surat than was necessary for recovering myself after my journey; I left so thoroughly disgusted with all I heard and saw there. I journeyed on until I reached Broach, the birthplace of Fuzl Khan. If I found Surat a filthy residence, how much more disgusting was this place! It seemed the concentration of all the dirt in the country, the centre of every beastly and disgusting habit. A native-born individual not only ruled or managed the

people, but his superior also. It was painfully ludicrous to hear how the wise and proper regulations of the Government were constantly evaded or set at nought, by the very person employed and paid to see them enforced. The confidence reposed in vagabonds with the high-sounding names of sudr aumeen, foudar, sheristadar, vakeel, &c., exhibited a great degree of folly. Whoever has attained one of these titles is very certain to make his fortune quickly; and I longed for one of the appointments, where ease, and comfort, and competence were insured by a little address in screwing the people. But I must pass over other particulars of my journey, and take up my story from the time I entered Baroda, this being an interval of some days from my leaving the den of the Bheels.

The English Government was just at this period very suspicious of the Guicowar, having reason to fear he would join the confederated powers of the Deccan. Not thinking news of this nature could be of any moment to me, I neglected to make particular inquiries respecting any change of affairs that might have happened in the court, and made my way directly to the palace. At Broach I had taken care to provide myself with the bow, arrows, and garb of a Bheel, and took the character as well as I could, covering myself with a cloak, that I might not be known for one in the streets of Baroda. On entering the palace, I solicited an audience of the Guicowar, which was refused until I stated my errand, and the object of my visit. This I

whispered in the ear of an attendant, and the name of "Mulharia Bheel" acted like magic. I had an audience immediately; but when in the presence of the Guicowar, my courage very nearly failed me. All the horrors I felt when personating the magician before the Peeshwa at Poona now came upon me again. It was impossible, I knew, to recede; and therefore I mustered courage to present the letter of the Bheel chief, saying that Sumboo having expired suddenly, and Mulharia being pressed for time, I had been deputed to convey the letter. The Guicowar upon this called in his secretary, who with difficulty made out the contents of the epistle. After it had been read, both of them eyed me in a very pointed way, and retired into an inner apartment. I would have given double the sum I came to demand, had I possessed it, to have got clear out of the palace. In about an hour's time the Guicowar returned, and desired me to await his reply a little longer. Hearing an unusual bustle in the court below, I ventured to peep through the window, and, to my consternation, beheld the British Resident there, whose arrival caused the guard to be turned out, and I witnessed the pomp with which he was received upon his entrance to the palace. Something now struck me that this visit was connected with my demand for the money; and on the Resident entering the room in which I was, and looking me very hard in the face, I was confirmed in the truth of my conjecture. "Well," thought I, "my doom is fixed!" The

Guicowar having called me to him, the carpet was turned back that I might not pollute it, and I approached him. "Listen," said he; "your master has taken a most unlucky time to make his demand upon me." Thinking his highness was going to plead his inability to pay, or frame some excuse to evade doing so, I plucked up courage, and said, "And most unlucky it will be for you and your villages if the demand be not complied with. You have read the letter, and must be aware of the consequences of non-compliance."—"Insolent scoundrel!" cried the Guicowar; "I will not only not comply with the audacious demand, but will make the bearer of it shorter by a head. Guards, seize that contumacious rebel!—confine him in the lowest dungeons of the palace, and await my further orders respecting him!" I was instantly disarmed, and dragged down to the dungeons. A pretty business have I made of it, I reasoned to myself. All is now over! They brought me such provisions as a Bheel would not have refused, but which it would have polluted me to touch. Such was the consequence of my assuming a false character. The bearer of them appeared inclined to be communicative, though in a sarcastic way. He cried, "Thou great deputy of Sumboo, and ambassador of Mulharia, eat thy fill to-day, to-morrow thou wilt die. What an idiot you were to come and thrust your neck under the axe in the way you have done! Did you not know that the Guicowar and the English are now become sworn friends, and have entered into fresh treaties,

in which they jointly engage to put down you rebel Bheels? The Guicowar now does not heed your threats—you can no more intimidate him. O you ass! if your master had not known this, his ambassador should have had wit enough to have discovered it in Baroda, before he rushed into the very jaws of his enemy." I now saw how needful it was to have inquired into the state of political affairs before I rashly made my demand. "My friend," said I, "is it certain I am to die to-morrow?" "Ay," he replied, "and ten thousand more of your gang, if we could lay our hands upon them. I always thought the Bheels were cunning fellows, but you are no specimen of their superior sagacity; Ram, Ram, thou Bheel ass!" On so concluding, he left me, as may be very easily guessed, in no enviable state of mind. There seemed no hope for me, either of mercy or escape. The next day came; my gaoler appeared again, but did not open his lips to me. Another and another passed away, in solitude and suspense. At length I was summoned to appear in presence of the Guicowar and his ministers. The English Resident was present; and I made up my mind, should they sentence me to die, that I would fall at his highness's feet, and relate the whole affair as it really stood. To my indescribable joy, however, the Guicowar began by saying he would spare my life upon one condition, namely, that I should accompany the soldiers to the haunt of the Bheels as a guide, by which means they might be surprised and taken. "I know," said he, "that some of

you thieves will often prefer dying to discovering the haunts of your associates ; but do you be wise, and you will preserve your life ; be foolish, and you perish." The English Resident repeating the promise that my life should be spared, I fell down and related all that had befallen me : how I had been robbed by the Bheels ; in what manner I had gained my money (taking on me the name of Nanna), and the scheme I had planned to get reimbursed. I concluded my relation by stating that I would with all my heart conduct the troops, as far as I could recollect the road, to the haunt of the robbers. All who were present were astonished and amused at my tale, and at the attempt to deceive both the Bheel and Guicowar. The Resident, hearing I was the man who caused Trimbuckje to be apprehended, instantly became my friend.

I was now sent back to my dungeon, and ordered to hold myself in readiness to march with the troops in two days' time. I rejoiced in this delay, as I thought it would give my companions time to be off from the cavern before the soldiers surrounded the entrance, otherwise I feared they would be put to the sword with the rest. I enjoyed a sound sleep on the ensuing night, though the harassing and pain of mind I had undergone did not lead me to expect it. My gaoler came to me on my return to my prison, and said, "So you are no Bheel, after all? Well, I thought as much ; a Bheel would have been a little more circumspect in presenting such a letter to the Guicowär. You are a shrewd fellow,

though, for all that blunder ; by Ishwar, you were very nigh pocketing the cash. A week earlier, and the Guicowar durst not have refused your demand. Come, as you are a Hindoo, you shall, if you like, cook your own food. Never counterfeit a Bheel again ; it is a most hazardous character —scarcely safe in the jungles, much less within the walls of a palace.” I thanked him for his advice, and promised to regard it as long as I lived, in which it may be taken for granted I was sincere, as I bitterly repented my late exploit. When the fellow left me, I began to fear that my chance of meeting Nanna again was very little, unless he should hear a rumour of the events which had occurred at the palace. In that case, I conjectured he would wait in Baroda my return with the soldiers, for I most anxiously looked forward to the day when I should again see my friend, and tell him from what cause our plot miscarried.

Two days had elapsed, and on the third I was ordered by my masters to get ready for setting out. I replied that I had no preparations to make, and that I was ready on the instant. I added that I only waited their pleasure, and that they would have no difficulty in finding me at my post, for being found at which I must confess my obligation to them. At length I was led out, placed on a horse, and ordered to proceed, and lead the way at the head of a strong detachment of horse and foot soldiers, commanded by European officers. These very civilly informed me on starting, that they had orders to shoot me through the head,

if I failed in my promise to conduct them to the right place. I told them I was certain I could take them within a coss of the spot; but I could not answer for my memory explaining to me every turning and winding of the jungle, as if I had been an old inhabitant of the place, and that I trusted they would not expect me to do things that might be impossible. I swore I would do what I could to lead them direct to the spot, and assist them all in my power. They bade me lead on, and I set forward. We were followed through the city by crowds of inquisitive persons, eager to get a sight of the sham Bheel, as they denominated me. I felt so much shame that I covered my head with a cloak, so that my eyes only, could be seen, and thus proceeded beyond the city walls. Every house and window was filled with females anxious to get a sight of me. It was nearly at the limits of the city and as we were emerging from a narrow lane, in which a dwelling stood solitary and detached, when, going towards the gate, I cast my eyes to the upper windows crowded with females, all laughing at the cavalcade, and (what language can describe my astonishment !) I beheld my dear Sagoonah, who was one of the anxious and inquisitive spectators awaiting the arrival of the sham Bheel. I could scarcely keep my seat on horseback at the discovery. To see her, under such circumstances, for the first time after our separation, and to be unable to approach her and fold her to my bosom !—that she should see me thus a prisoner, dependent only on the will of others, and doing only what they com-

manded me to do, cut me to the heart. My consolation was, that she could not possibly recognise me, and my hope that, in a day or two, I might return again to Baroda and behold her free. I was happy indeed when I reflected that I was forced to conceal my person, and that she could not witness the degradation to be mine. I grew so dejected in a little time that my escort began to think me an impostor. Why did I not push on with spirit, they repeated to each other; I must therefore dread the termination of the journey. "Well may he be afraid," said one soldier, "for the idea of a brace of bullets through his head cannot be a very cheering one."—"Oh, he will not be hurt," said another, "if he lead us to the place and perform his promise."—"True," replied the first speaker, "but I will wager a rupee he is leading us"—"What?" said a third. "Why, where he does not know himself."—"We shall see," cried another voice, "if we are to be made fools of, and led through those unhealthy jungles for nothing; if we are, I hope I shall be employed to blow out his brains." These observations, or similar ones, were constantly making, and I was forced both to hear and to bear them in silence. I was in no very enviable situation, for I might easily go wrong through the difficult, narrow, and overgrown paths which we had to pass along. This, as if to inflict still more torture upon me, was happening just as I got a glimmering of hope and happiness once more, by the discovery of Sa-goonah. My thoughts added to my pain;—the shadow

thus cast over my dream of bliss, the miscarriage of my plan, no friend near me, and scarcely able to congratulate myself on my escape from the jungles and fevers, before I was again compelled to breathe their pestiferous atmosphere, with a brace of pistols close to my head, ready to be discharged whenever the caprice of the holders should be inclined so to do. I had just escaped from the hazards of the wild beasts, to fall into the hands of men far more savage! Could I forbear from appearing dispirited?

We continued our march, until, in due course, we reached the jungles, in which, after we had proceeded for two days, we arrived at the place where Nanna, Fuzl Khan, and myself had been captured by the Bheels. To the right of the spot, lay the narrow path by which we were led, and I headed the soldiers in that direction. The underwood thickened, and the path became every step more difficult. I could not see an inch before me. The vegetation rose far higher than our heads, and was very dense, and in some places united above us. I was still tolerably confident we were in the right way; yet I was not without my fears upon the subject, for we passed several turnings to the right and left. At length we came to a gentle ascent, which I remembered I had gone over, not far from the cave. My spirits rose, though I feared what might be the fate of my old companions during the attack, should they by any chance expose themselves; but I thought my own safety was now secured. I bade the soldiers be on the alert;

and I had scarcely so cautioned them, before we were involved in the gloomy shadow of the rock in which the cave was situated. It towered high in the air above us, rough and craggy ; at the base was an arch which spanned the entrance to the stronghold of the Bheels. A party of the soldiers dismounted, and drew up in a crescent around the entrance, while another forced its way in. The alarm was speedily spread to the inmost recesses of the hold. The Bheels resisted valiantly, and the work of death began. Mulharia with his powerful arm made wonderful efforts to cut his way through the party that first entered, and succeeded ; but he was shot outside the cave. The whole band were speedily overpowered and slain, except two, who were badly wounded, one of whom informed me that there were two prisoners in the vaults below. I there found Nanna and Fuzl Khan. It appeared that the British Resident, suspecting the bearer of Mulharia's forced draft, refused to pay the money ; and the latter, enraged, had subjected them to a severe imprisonment, and threatened their lives. Nanna inquired how he saw me there with soldiers ; but I told him it was no moment for explanation then, and bade him follow me to the daylight. I led my two friends forth to the officers commanding the detachment, introducing them as my companions in misfortune, and begging they might be allowed to accompany us back to Baroda. My request was immediately acceded to ; and all being anxious to quit the jungles, we set out for Guzerat on

our return. The officers commanding told me I was at liberty to go wherever I pleased, they having no orders to take me back with them, in the event of my performing my promise. I begged, however, to be allowed to proceed with them, to which they agreed.

Nanna, Fuzl Khan, and myself brought up the rear of the party; and the soldiers being a little in advance, Fuzl Khan said, "Nanna, after you went, told me of your scheme. How have you succeeded? Have you secured the money of the Guicowar?"—"Let us hear all about it," said Nanna; "how came you here with soldiers?" I speedily satisfied their curiosity, and related the danger I had encountered. "If," said Fuzl Khan, "you had deigned to consult me on the subject, I could have told you how the affair would terminate. These Guzerat rajahs never come down with cash; nothing but mortars and nine-pounders can extract it from them. Mulharia, of course, tried all he could to frighten the Guicowar out of his money; but he knew there was little or no chance of succeeding; and for you two fellows, who pretend to be so sharp and cunning, to be entrapped by a Bheel's paltry scrawl, I am surprised at you! Consult me the next time, I pray you. I am not such a fool as to have acted as you did, and can see as far forward as any one. But you are a bold fellow, I must allow, to enter a palace, and act the part of a Bheel there! I wonder your head was not struck off on the spot!" There was much good sense in Fuzl Khan's remark, and

both Nanna and myself found, on reflection, that his observations were unanswerable.

We at length reached Baroda in safety, and put up at a comfortable durhm sallah. I now informed Nanna that I had seen Sagoonah looking from a window in the part of the town which I have before mentioned. He advised me to lose no time, but to repair thither at once, and make inquiries, offering to accompany me. I accepted his offer, and we proceeded together to reconnoitre the house. I cannot describe the transport I felt when we set out, and I hoped to clasp my beloved girl once more to my heart. What was my disappointment on finding that Sagoonah and her aunt had set out four days before, and taken the road to Surat ! that they lived with a rich old grain-dealer, who provided for them—Sagoonah's aunt acting as his housekeeper. Having nothing more to detain us in Baroda, I determined to follow their steps. Fuzl Khan was charmed at the idea of once more seeing Broach, which lay in our route ; for, in returning from the jungles, the soldiers took a nearer way back to Baroda than by passing through Surat and Broach —so Fuzl Khan had missed seeing his native city. Before we set off, Nanna wished to obtain some money by drawing a bill on the British Resident ; but not one of the sahoukars or bankers would cash it unless he found security for its payment, or until a reply could be got from Kandeish. This he could not do ; and thus every chance of getting money at Baroda vanished. It was possible I might over-

take Sagoonah at Broach; and therefore I went to the house where I had seen her, and inquired the name of the grain-dealer with whom she was travelling. They told me he was called Hurrychund Doolabdass, a very infirm old man, whose love of money was so great, he would not leave off trade while he had an eye left, or leg remaining to stand upon. In consequence of his age, he travelled very slowly, and there was every reason to think I should overtake him at Broach. If we were fortunate enough to do this (which Nanna agreed to try by forced marches), there could be no doubt the old merchant would advance the cash upon the draft of Nanna on the Resident, as Sagoonah would, no doubt, answer for our characters. We accordingly set out, without a single rupee in our pockets. Fuzl Khan was the first to complain of hunger, and declared he could not walk another coss* without something to eat. Just at this moment we met some bullock-drivers, and begged a little rice or grain of them, which they kindly gave us on explaining our necessities; and thus we contrived to reach the end of our first day's march, very much fatigued.

* About two miles.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WE arrived at Broach without any incident of note occurring to us, and entered safely into that sink of filth and abomination. I made inquiry at the grain-dealer's bazaar for Hurrychund, the merchant; and, to my great joy, heard he was then sojourning at the house of one of the principal grain-dealers. I lost not a moment in going thither; and at last, folded Sagoonah in my arms. Her joy at seeing me was excessive. She thought I had forgotten her, or deserted her for some other girl. "At one time I would doubt your constancy," she said; "and then I thought you might be a prisoner, or, perhaps, no more. Tell me all—tell me where you have been, and why so long separated from us?" I observed to her that my sufferings had been great, but that I had abated nothing in my affection for her, and had vowed to find her out if I searched the world over for her; that now I had succeeded, and we would part no more. Her aunt was also overjoyed at seeing me, and immediately cooked a very comfortable repast for me, a luxury I had not enjoyed for many a day before. I begged leave to introduce Nanna, and went and fetched him. I found him

in the house, endeavouring to negotiate his draft with old Hurrychund, who refused to make him an advance until assured by Sagoonah that we were not swindlers, and that he might rely upon my word. Nanna gave a bill upon the British Resident at Kandeish, but took only one hundred rupees. Nanna came to dine with us ; and, on introducing him, I pointed him out as being one to whom we were indebted for the removal of one of our foes, Trimbuckje Danglia. "Thank Heaven !" said the lovely girl ; "he is no longer to be dreaded ; he has, indeed, been an inveterate enemy !"

We had finished our conversation, and were just going to dine, when a sudden dizziness of head came over me, and my brain seemed to whirl round. Fever succeeded, and I found the pestiferous air of the jungles had begun to act upon my constitution. My late march on foot, joined to my anxiety of mind, had, no doubt, contributed to increase its virulence. Instead of enjoying the company of Sagoonah, I was doomed to toss on a bed of fever, and to writhe in delirium. Day after day the fever continued to visit me. Sometimes the cold fit would make my jaws chatter, and seem to freeze my blood ; then a burning heat would parch up my mouth, and bring with it temporary madness. How long I continued in this state I cannot tell ; but I found myself one morning in a violent perspiration, and felt better. The first person I knew was Sagoonah, watching me like a Peri—anxiety in her countenance, and

her tenderness standing in her eyes. The sight almost repaid me for my sufferings; and I was about to speak, when she anticipated me, by desiring me not to make an effort too great for my strength, and, pressing my emaciated hand, bid me be composed. At the foot of my bed was an Englishman, who, I learned, was my doctor, and that his skill had brought me back from the brink of the grave. As soon as I was well able to converse, I inquired for Nanna, and found that he was also slowly recovering from the fever. Of Fuzl Khan nothing was known, though it appeared he had escaped it, as a Mohammedan had, I found, called daily to make inquiries after me. I requested the next time he called I might see him. The doctor soon pronounced me out of danger, and I thanked him most gratefully for the care he had bestowed upon me. He asked if I could account for the attack—if I knew any cause? I thereupon gave him the history of my visit to the jungles, and my return, and advised him, should duty or inclination lead him to visit the Deccan, by all means to avoid the jungles of Kandeish. He assured me he should do so most scrupulously, for he had never, or rarely, witnessed a species of fever more violent than that from which I was recovering. He told me that Nanna's restoration was certain, but slow, he not having had attentions bestowed upon him similar to those on me by Sagoonah; nor had he taken his medicine regularly, or he would have been further advanced in a state of convalescence than he then was.

From this I learned the additional value of female kindness. Again and again I thanked and blessed the girl to whom I owed so much, and whose unremitting attention had rescued me from the grave.

I now gained fresh strength daily, and had a great desire to hear from Sagoonah her history while we were separated from each other; I therefore besought her to give me a minute detail of her sufferings and adventures, promising to relate mine in return.

She thus commenced :—“After your departure we resided in the village, and nothing interrupted our peace for a considerable time. At last a religious old woman called on my aunt one day, and endeavoured to persuade us to visit the temple to perform our devotions. My aunt consented to go on the following day. The woman said that there was the same night to be a grand ceremony, when every one should attend, and advised us to be there at an hour she named. We agreed to this, and she left us, evidently much pleased at getting our consent. After she was gone I ventured to hint my suspicion to my aunt that all was not right, and that I distrusted this old hag. I called to her recollection the warnings you gave us against admitting religious mendicants into the house, and declared my determination not to go to the temple, either by day or night. My aunt now began to open her eyes, and suspect all was not correct, upon calling to mind several things in the woman’s conduct which had not struck her at the time; particularly a

suspicious anxiety on the subject. In consequence we did not attend the ceremony, but stayed at home. On the following day the old woman called again ; but we had previously given orders that she should not be admitted, and she went away highly incensed. A gossein next tried to gain admittance, but without success, as we were of course on our guard against the whole tribe. We now never ventured to stir from home, and admitted no strangers. All our precautions, however, were useless, for violence effected what fraud had been unable to perform. Our house was one night surrounded by armed men, and we were dragged from our beds, and borne off on horseback at a rapid rate. The persons who committed this outrage were in the employ of Trimbuckje, and we had no power to do anything but submit to our lot. In due time we reached Asseerghur, into the citadel of which we were conducted, and locked up for the night in a narrow cell. In the morning we were taken before the killehdar, who was smoking his hookah. He asked me if I was not a fool to refuse the brilliant offers of Trimbuckje Danglia. I told him that as I had refused the still more brilliant offers of the Peeshwa, it was not probable I should accept those of his slave. The killehdar then said, 'Insolent girl ! you shall repent this contumacious conduct. Remember, in a week's time I shall call again upon you for an answer ; and if you still remain an enemy to your own happiness, we must try other means to force a compliance.' We were now dismissed, and again locked up in the cell,

and fed upon the coarsest grain. Our guards were sullen, or I should have asked why we were not at once conveyed to Trimbuckje Danglia, and what necessity there was for detaining us longer in Aseerghur. In the course of a week a compassionate woman, the wife of the jummahdar deputy, visited us, and we learned from her that Trimbuckje was involved at that time in much difficulty, and could not at the moment receive us. In fact, we found that he was actually a prisoner, though he hoped soon to be set free, when he would no doubt turn his thoughts towards me. We lingered in our cell week after week, almost starved, and clothed with miserable blankets. At length we found that Trimbuckje had escaped, and would soon appear in the Deccan again. We now thought that if there was a possibility of escape we should try it now ; for, should Trimbuckje arrive in the fort, we should be irretrievably ruined. The only thing was how we could effect such a thing, confined and watched as we were. We could come to no determination, until the female who had before taken compassion on us came again, and gave us provisions and sundry articles of comfort. We lamented our hard fate to her, and she pitied our sufferings. This led us to indulge the hope that through her means we might contrive some mode of escape. Our intimacy increased daily, and we at length ventured to hint our wish that she would assist us in obtaining our enlargement. She lent a favourable ear to our applications, but declared her inability to be of service. We acknowledged our

obligations to her for her repeated kindness ; and, as a token of remembrance, I presented her with some of my hair braided with silver wire, which she said she should carefully preserve for my sake." Here I interrupted Sagoonah, by telling her I had seen the trinket, which was very dear to me, and I wore it next my heart until the Bheels robbed me of it. I now explained how it came into my possession, relating my adventure with the very woman to whom she was under such obligations, and my having preserved her from being plundered, which she was overjoyed to hear. Sagoonah then resumed her story :—“One day the wife of the jummahdar’s deputy communicated to us a plan by which we effected our escape. My heart beat with joy at the idea of getting beyond the walls of the fortress, and I fell at the feet of our deliverer, kissing them with rapture. She raised me up, and bid us be cautious, stating that she had obtained permission for us to visit her at her house that day, and in the evening she intended going down the hill to pay her devotions to her god, when she was always attended by two of her retinue, whose clothes she proposed we should wear, and thus pass the gates without suspicion. Her own servants were to take our characters, and be conducted to the prison in our stead. As soon as the affair was discovered, and the servants were found not to be what they represented, they would be discharged. If the mistress was suspected, her husband would only be fined, and she herself come off with a scolding. This plan was duly

carried into effect. We paid our visit to the lady, who took us through the gates in safety. How my heart beat when I found myself outside the fort! We took a hasty and grateful farewell of our kind friend, thanking her with tears of joy. She advised us to fly from that part of the country with all expedition. We followed her advice and made for the jungles, near which, at a late hour of the night, we came to a glen, where was the habitation of an old goatherd. We knocked at his door for admittance; but when he found we had escaped from the fort, he was very anxious for our departure, fearing he might suffer if it were known he had afforded us shelter. Very early the next morning, before he arose, we again set off, and struck into a road on the left, among ragged pathways and waterfalls. Whether we were travelling on the right road we could not tell; but trusting to fortune, and being sensible that every step took us farther from the place of our captivity, we kept on until we came to a river, so shallow as to allow us to ford it. Here my aunt became so much fatigued she could proceed no further. We therefore sat down under a tree, and eat some dried grain which the goatherd had given us, and drank water from the river. When somewhat refreshed, we renewed our journey until evening gathered in around us. We fortunately met some bullock-drivers, and my aunt asked the men if we were on the right road to Guzerat, and how far we were from Nasik. To our great disappointment, we learned that Nasik was three days'

journey from the spot we then stood, and that there was only one village on the way. I called out in despair to my aunt, 'Arry Mousee, what shall we do?'—'By Ishwar,' said one of the drivers, 'I have heard that voice before;' and coming up to me, rudely uncovered my face, saying, 'Ah! my little traveller; what, is it you again? where is your protector now?' You may conjecture what my fears were at the moment, when I state that this fellow was the impertinent bullock-driver who accompanied us from Poona to Seroor, and pretended you were gone forward. 'I have got you now,' continued the scoundrel, 'and shall take the liberty of carrying you with me as far as Asseerghur. 'Tis strange if I don't turn a penny of you some way or another.' On hearing Asseerghur named, my aunt screamed; upon which the driver said, 'I see how it is—you have escaped from thence. This is fortunate for me; I shall be sure of a reward for bringing you back again. So come, mount my bullock, my pretty girl, and make up your mind to return whence you came.' So severe a disappointment quite overcame me, and I fell senseless to the earth. At this moment a man on horseback came up, desiring to know the cause of the delay. He was a grain-dealer, accompanying the laden beasts. I begged him to interfere and release us, saying, we were unfortunate women seized by the driver; upon which the latter declared I was his wife, whom he had lost for a long time, and that now, having found me, he determined upon never quitting me again. I declared it was all

false, and fell at the merchant's feet, as did my aunt, telling him the fellow wanted to get a reward for bringing us again into a captivity from whence we had escaped, and that we preferred death to returning to the fort. The merchant, fearing we should delay his cattle, and he lose his market, ordered the fellow to let us go immediately and to proceed. The driver, though very sullen, was forced to obey, grumbling to us that he would be even with us yet—some one should soon be after us. We thanked our deliverer, who recommended us to call on Hurrychund Doolabdass, in that place, who was about to proceed to Surat, and he probably would allow us to follow in his suite. He also directed us on the way to Nasik. We begged his name, by means of which perhaps Hurrychund might sooner notice us. He told us he was called Toolseram, and so bid us farewell.

“Being now free of the impertinent driver, we once more indulged hopes of a safe arrival at Guzerat, and made use of every effort to gain the first halting-place, which was a miserable durhm sallah, without a village near it, or any kind of comfort whatever. I need not tire you with a detail of our sufferings on our journey, but merely state that, after encountering the most severe hardships, we reached Nasik. Our first care was to find out Hurrychund, in which we succeeded. We communicated to him the circumstances by which we became known to Toolseram, the grain-dealer. He congratulated us upon our escape, and offered us lodgings for the night, stating that, in a day

or two, he should proceed towards Guzerat, and if we pleased we might accompany him. We cooked our rice, and my aunt, out of compliment, sent the old merchant some *sheeree pooree* (a dish in the making of which she excelled). Hurry-chund was so pleased, that he declared no one else should cook for him in future but my aunt, and she has ever since superintended his household affairs, and cooked his victuals herself. We reached Baroda in safety, travelling by easy stages, not through the jungles, but by a more circuitous route. At Baroda we lived in a narrow lane"— Here I interrupted her by saying I knew that, for there I saw her. "Saw me!" said Sagoonah, "and would not come to me! O Pandurang!" I said I would have given worlds to have flown to her arms; but when she heard the circumstances under which I was situated, she would acquit me of neglect. I inquired if she did not remember the sham Bheel, and informed her that I was the person—the very sham Bheel whom she laughed at from the window. Sagoonah hereupon made me relate all the circumstances that had taken place since we met before, which I now found myself strong enough to do.

Sagoonah was much struck with the history of Mahadeo, the first Pindaree, and made me relate it over again to her aunt. The latter declared her firm belief that Gabbage had murdered his nephew, to whom Sagoonah had been betrothed. "Ay," cried I, "and his brother also, the poor boy's father." She said she very much doubted that, for

she had heard from good authority that he had escaped the vengeance of Gunput Rao. I then continued my history, and made them laugh heartily at the tale of Fuzl Khan. When I stated that the plan of old Gabbage was to force Sagoonah to marry his son Mahadeo, the women were both astonished at the old scoundrel's knavery and art. Sagoonah declared she would die sooner than be wedded to the son of such a fiend, though he were to be crowned king of the world. They now more valued the state of security in which they found themselves, and congratulated one another on their lucky escape from Asseerghur. The women were also rejoiced to find that their rich relation was at present in existence at Satarah, though the belief of his having entered deeply into the views of the pretender to the musnud, Gunput Rao, greatly embittered the pleasure they would otherwise have felt, as it was impossible, under such circumstances, that they could ever approach him. We talked over the mysterious appearance of the old goat-herd of the glen ; and from the words which I had overheard Gabbage use, it struck us as very probable he might be that villain's brother, and the rightful successor to the musnud of Satarah. This surmise gathered strength from the concern he displayed when I informed him that Gabbage still lived, and from this information it was that he gathered he was not in security where he then resided. The rest of my adventures amused the women much ; but they censured me severely for acting the part of the Bheel at Baroda, and

were astonished how I could present the letter without first seeing my way clear as to the state of matters at court. The certainty that the bullock-driver would give information to Gabbage respecting the women greatly annoyed us. He would be sure to find the gossein at Asseerghur, and Kokoo we were certain would be after us, whether the driver gave information or not.

Our conversation was concluded by our receiving a message from Nanna, whom I was able to inform that I was much better, and hoped soon to see. The fever had not yet left him altogether, and he was still very low. Fuzl Khan also called to learn how I was : and when Sagoonah saw him she could not help smiling at the recollection of his extraordinary adventures. I had now been nearly twenty days on the bed of sickness, and Nanna very nearly as many. - Fuzl Khan had no money, nor any means of subsistence. He succeeded pretty well at first among his old Mohammedan acquaintance. His father had gone to Surat, and had set up a grinding-shop there. Nanna advanced him a few rupees, as he was useful to us on many occasions. One particular duty we assigned him, which was to watch all strangers, and see if he could discern Kokoo or Gabbage in the town. We accurately described their persons to him, and he promised to use his utmost vigilance. I also made him promise he would not engage either in puchees or eki beki, but keep quiet until we could get him some situation. At length, I found myself perfectly

recovered, and thought it was become time to seek out the means of obtaining a livelihood. Sagoonah spoke to Hurrychund for me, who in a little time procured me the situation of a writer under the Nazir of the udalut or court of justice at Broach.

The Nazir is a perpetual sheriff, and executes writs and summonses to all the parties required to attend in civil and criminal cases. Nanna contrived, by paying enormous fees, to get employed in the police department, so that thus, doubly armed with authority, we conceived ourselves a fair match for Kokoo, should he venture to appear at Broach with any hostile intentions. Fuzl Khan was made a peon in the udalut, and thus we were all provided for.

The system adopted by the English government for the administration of justice, however admirable in theory, is in many respects liable to perversion by those who carry it into effect. The artful agents of the court-house were perpetually on the look-out to take advantage of every new regulation or decision of the judge. My duty was to make out the summonses, and copy papers of importance. Nanna was also fully employed, and for three months we enjoyed uninterrupted peace. News reached us from the Deccan that Badjerao had surrendered to the English, who were now its sole masters. Broach, and all the stations in Guzerat, continued in their usual quiet state. The deposed king of Satarah was once more placed upon his musnud by the all-conquering English; but his health was in such a

precarious state, it was supposed he could not enjoy his newly-recovered power for any length of time. I heard also that a person named Gunput Rao, attended by his son, had openly declared himself successor to the throne, and that on the demise of the present rajah, there was no doubt but the English would acknowledge his claims, no one appearing to dispute them. This intelligence was of great consequence to Sagoonah, who now more than ever wished to keep out of her uncle's reach.

We still remained in peace at Broach, and I will now take the opportunity of letting the reader know the nature of the duties which my new situation required, and give a brief account of the manner in which the English organised our court.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE court of Broach consisted of the judge, a registrar, and an assistant-registrar—all Englishmen acquainted with the native languages. The first, of course, from a longer residence in the country, was the most experienced man of the three, and was accordingly at the head of the department. Before the judge, suits involving any amount were tried; before the registrar, only those which did not exceed five hundred rupees. Independently of the decision of civil suits, the registrar's business was to register all bonds and deeds of importance, receiving a fee of two rupees for every bond so registered. The assistant-registrar was generally a young man, lately arrived in the country, to whom the management of a few easy suits, of small amount, was intrusted, upon each of which a regulated fee was paid. The registrar also received established fees, in proportion to the amount of suits decided by him; but the judge received a regular income, and had no fees of any description. The judge also decided criminal as well as civil causes, and was consequently employed every day in the year. Some of my countrymen, who knew nothing of the

true state of things, imagined these officers had nothing to do but amuse themselves and make money—they were greatly in error; the duties were most laborious, and the pay scarcely adequate to the labour performed. Two days every week, suits were filed, numbered, and distributed to the persons authorised to decide upon them. In a city like Broach or Surat, the file was never clear, although the judges worked hard every day. New cases constantly poured in, much faster than the old could be got rid of; and without the greatest attention and regularity, the file would accumulate so great a number of causes for hearing, that no judge could get through it. A reader and writer belonged to this court. The first read the plaintiff's petition. The judge then called for the defendant's reply; which, being read, was entered, as well as the petition, in the record book by the attendant's writer, whose business it was to number and enter every document read before the judge. After the answer of the defendant was read, a second statement was heard from the plaintiff, and then a rejoinder from the defendant; but no other documents were admitted. The plaintiff was then called upon to prove his assertions, which he did by parole or documentary testimony, and after him the defendant was called on to disprove them. The judge then gave judgment.

Supposing the parties involved in a suit are not confident in their own skill and management of their affairs on the trial, the government vakeels, or pleaders, natives of the

country, were ready to plead for them, and conduct their cases through. Everything was done with the greatest order and regularity: no confusion, no squabbling, or pulling off turbans, or coarse abuse was allowed. All had equal access to the judge in his regular and appointed turn. O my poor countrymen of the Deccan, I used to think, how differently these matters were managed with you ! No feeling or bribery was allowed at Broach, no gratuities to greedy arbitrators and potails, &c. But, with all its excellencies and advantages, the good intentions of the government were too often perverted even there, and unsuspicuous judges imposed upon. Still, such cases were rare, and, if detected, were severely punished. The mode thus adopted at Broach, and the wish to render strict justice to all, were so much approved by the people, that they contrived to keep the files of the respective courts crammed full. There were not persons wanting who urged this as an argument against the very way in which the English administered justice, urging that it promoted litigation, and advising that the people should keep to the old rules of their fathers. Such a class of fatuitous reasoners is never wanting in any country, to fling dirt upon improvements, and extol custom beyond common sense. The old system of arbitration, which I may hereafter touch upon, being the institution of past times, was that which those who did not take the trouble to examine into the reason of things extolled to the skies. The singular circumstances of my life threw me

into many situations wherein I had opportunities of making my observations on both systems. But I must first mention here, that the inhabitants and subjects of the government at Broach, and the neighbouring places, were in general very well satisfied with the dispensation of justice made for them. Trade flourished, and each individual felt secure in his property. That the establishment of the *udalut*, or court of justice, was the reason that causes were increased, is very incorrect. Justice had not before been attainable, and the people were obliged to endure wrong, for which they had no redress. When they found that injustice could no longer exist with impunity, they poured their grievances into the court. It might, therefore, as well be asserted that the erection of an hospital was the cause of an increase of sickness, as that giving the people an opportunity of gaining justice was the cause of the increase of applications to the courts. From the judge at Broach, an appeal lay to the superior court of Surat, called the court of appeal, and from thence to the sudr *udalut* at Bombay ; what more could be wished or desired ? The criminal code of regulations was equally good. The judge, though he had the power of committing a felon, did not try him. A circuit court was established, and one of its members went round to the different stations and held a jail delivery ; so that the committal by the resident judge, was frequently no more than for safe custody till trial, when the prisoner was set at liberty.

Through the interest of Hurrychund, I at length obtained

the situation of pleader in the court of udalut, in the registrar's department, and was now quite a man of consequence. Nanna continued attached to the police, and Fuzl Khan was still a peon, and carried a sword. Old Hurrychund had a nephew, who was lately married at Surat. The new-married couple arrived at Broach to visit him, and I was invited to dine with them on the first day of their arrival. The bride was accompanied by her mother ; the former named Beema Bhae, and the latter Anundee Bhae. Beema was in height and figure very like Sagoonah. Nanna was invited at the same time, and we had a very pleasant party. Before we separated, Hurrychund proposed giving a dinner to the caste of Marwarrys, of which he was a member. His nephew having no objection, invitations were sent out the following day, and the dinner was fixed to take place in four days' time. All the caste, save one individual named Premje, were invited. This person was considered an outcast, for some cause which I never heard explained. The dinner was accordingly given, and about one hundred and twenty Marwarrys partook of it. In the middle of the dinner, a man entered the room among the guests, and demanded why he was excluded, saying, he was a Marwarry, and would come also. All was immediately bustle and confusion, and the party demanded that he should be excluded or turned out. Poor Premje seemed in a dreadful passion, but it availed him little ; he was turned away by the company unanimously. Temporary booths are erected

before the doors of persons giving entertainments at Broach ; and, indeed, in many other parts of Hindustan, and the street is for the time blocked up. Premje, though ejected from the booth, would not go away, but stood on the outside, grumbling, and asserting his right to be invited to the dinner. At length, some of the guests were favourably inclined towards him, and said that Hurrychund had treated him harshly ; that since the alleged charges (for which he was now excluded) had been made against him, he had been seen at dinner with Gopaldass, the banker ; and that was precedent enough for giving him an invitation on the present occasion. Being myself seated near the entrance of the booth, I heard Premje declare he would bring an action against Hurrychund, for fixing such a stigma upon his character ; and with this threat he departed. The entertainment being over, I acquainted Hurrychund with Premje's threat ; who laughed, and said, "Well, Pandoo, if he does bring his action, recollect I retain you for my counsel, and hope you will get him worsted." I thanked him for his good intentions towards me, and told him, if Premje did put his threat into execution, I would do my best in his behalf. The following day was the first filing day in the court ; and, true to his threat, Premje thrust in his petition, or rather declaration, against Hurrychund— which was admitted and numbered in the usual way, and a day was appointed for hearing the cause. Premje's vakeel was a clever fellow, named Atchoo Bhae, who, as

soon as he knew his opponent was to be Pandurang, the Mahratta pleader, snapped his fingers exultingly, and declared he would beat me so hollow, that I should be ashamed ever again to show my face in court. In the evening, I visited Hurrychund, my client, and informed him that Premje had actually commenced proceedings against him, and begged him to furnish me with materials for his defence. The first question he asked me, was the amount of damages laid ; and I informed him that the sum was five hundred rupees, and that the cause would be tried before the registrar. “ ‘Tis a large sum,” said Hurrychund, “and you must speak loud, Pandoo, and do your best.” I promised him I would exert myself to the utmost ; and was beginning to take down the heads for the defence, when one of the Nazir’s peons entered, bearing a summons to Hurrychund, who was obliged to accompany him, to put in security for his appearance at the day of trial. This having been accomplished, the old merchant returned and duly instructed me how I was to proceed, and conduct the defence. My attention from the civil side of the court was drawn away, just as I had left Hurrychund, to the criminal department. As I quitted the door I met a mob approaching, and heard a voice calling out (which I knew to be Fuzl Khan’s) begging me to save him and his friends from ruin. On inquiry, I discovered that he and two of his Mohammedan acquaintance had committed a theft, and were all apprehended, and expected to find bail in Hurrychund’s house ;

in which they were disappointed, as I refused to interfere with the old man in their behalf—they were, I knew, such determined reprobates. Fuzl and his companions were consequently led away to prison. These true believers had for some time carried on a system of gambling, and were at last reduced to the extremity of committing a theft to raise funds for the support of themselves and their malpractices. The words of Fuzl Khan's mother, that eki beki would be his ruin, were thus verified. I immediately repaired to Nanna, and informed him of both these affairs. That of Premje he considered of most importance; as to the second, he contented himself with the observation, that Fuzl Khan ought to have been hanged long ago! I replied, as to that, it was not for us to pass judgment upon him, as we were far from being immaculate ourselves. Nanna did not much relish this remark, though he could not deny its justice; and he therefore turned off the conversation, and began to inquire particulars concerning the action with Premje. As I was pleader on the side of the defendant, I deemed it prudent to say as little on the subject as I could, and carefully to avoid letting out any part of the defence. I contented myself, therefore, with remarking, that I was confident of success; and I left him, expressing a hope, that as Fuzl Khan came soon under his department, he would try and do all he could for him. He nodded assent; but Nanna was too much of a Mahratta to take trouble without a fee for any one; and as poor Fuzl could not

bestow one, I was pretty certain no one would care a rush about him. For my own part, however willing I might be to serve him, I dared not risk offering a fee to carry into effect my good intentions respecting him, holding the situation I did ; he was, therefore, left to his fate.

The day of the trial of Hurrychund's cause came on. The court was crowded ; even the windows were filled with spectators of all descriptions, anxious to see the new pleader, and hear the arguments used to exculpate Hurrychund. The moment the opening of the cause took place, Atchoo Bhae, the pleader for the plaintiff, came forward, holding his client Premje by the hand. I approached alone, Hurrychund not choosing to be present. We stood in front of a large desk, at which the registrar sat. He was a little mean-looking man, very ill tempered. I never saw a more strange mortal. He looked like some of our deities, red-haired, with gooseberry eyes, and a great belly. He was so sour, that I was half afraid to address him. The declaration against the defendant was read. It complained that Premje Bohun, a Marwarry merchant, and inhabitant of the city of Broach, where he had resided for many years, gaining an honest livelihood by trade and fair dealing ; had ever adhered to the rules of the caste to which he belonged, and had been admitted to all assemblages of caste, within or without the city walls, until the fifth day of the current month, when Hurrychund Doolabdass invited the whole of the Marwarry caste to a dinner, in celebration of the

marriage of his nephew, Goolchund. In consequence, the whole caste assembled at Hurrychund's house; and, in booths erected for the occasion, partook of the entertainment so given; but that he, Premje, was excluded, as he did not receive any invitation; and that his character was much injured, and he was much aggrieved in consequence. That, hoping the omission was unintentional on the part of Hurrychund, he proceeded to the place of feasting, and entered the booth; from which he was rudely turned out, and ordered to go away. That he, therefore, sought compensation in damages for the injury sustained by him in loss of character, to the amount of five hundred rupees. This sum, if recovered, he intended to expend in giving a dinner to his caste, and in promoting every object that could tend to reinstate him in his former place in society, and thus remedy the injustice done him by the conduct of the defendant.

To this allegation I answered as follows:—"First, that he set forth he had ever adhered to the rules of his caste, and had been admitted to the assemblages of the Marwarry tribe on all occasions, until neglected by Hurrychund. Now, as to this point, no reply need be made, as the dinner was one, not given by Hurrychund, the defendant, to celebrate the marriage of his nephew: the dinner was not a caste dinner given by Hurrychund, but a private feast, given and paid for by his nephew, Goolchund; consequently, the present defendant could not be called upon

to pay damages for a neglect of which he had not been guilty. This assertion could be proved by witnesses. I admitted that Premje was not invited; but, if he had sustained any injury, he must sue the nephew and not the uncle." I consequently prayed that the plaintiff might be nonsuited. I next called my witnesses, who were persons present at the dinner; and they proved that the invitations sent to them were not in the name of Hurrychund, but of his nephew. Other witnesses proved that Goolchund paid them for the various articles supplied to the entertainment.

The above was a defence which the plaintiff was not prepared to meet. The ugly little judge, after asking a few questions, nonsuited Premje, adjudging him to pay all costs. Premje went away, determined to commence an action against Goolchund, the nephew: an arrangement we were not sorry for, as it would bring more fees into court. Hurrychund was pleased at my having put Premje to so much expense for nothing, and richly enjoyed the fellow's blunder. Sagoonah, too, congratulated me on my success in my first attempt; and the pleasure it seemed to give her was a spur to further diligence in my professional exertions.

Before the second suit was commenced, Fuzl Khan was brought to trial. He had been imprisoned from the moment he was apprehended. The circuit judge arrived, and held his court at the udalut in great pomp, attended by the registrar and the moulavee, the cazee* and two shas-

* Mohammedan law-officers.

trees.* It appeared that Fuzl Khan, in his capacity of peon, was employed to attach the property of a cloth-merchant, and ordered to keep guard over it. They who ordered him on this service little knew his character, or they would not have employed him in such a duty. Instead of guarding the property, he admitted two of his gambling associates to the warehouse, and all three helped themselves to the choicest muslins, kinkobs, and other fine articles. They were detected by one of the party wearing a rich muslin turban, and the other disposing of a shawl for half price at a pawnbroker's. Fuzl Khan's house was searched; and stolen property being found there, he was apprehended immediately. All three were found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour on the roads for one year. The next time I encountered my friend Fuzl, he was working in the registrar's garden, with irons on his legs. The fellow was singing away very merrily; but when he saw me he stopped and began conversation, reproaching me with having abandoned him in the needful moment. I satisfied him it was out of my power to have assisted him, or I should have rejoiced in being able to do so, and thus prevent his becoming the sad spectacle he now was. I gave him a few pice and went my way.

The time for the new trial of Premje against Goolchund drew near. I was prepared to defend the cause. At the

* Hindoo law-officers.

hour fixed the court was crowded, and the windows filled with people. One of these windows looked into the yard, and being open, a number of persons stood on the outside, and thrust in their heads. The window was exactly opposite the place in which I stood to plead. Goolchund himself was present, and full of anxiety lest he should have to pay five hundred rupees. He repeatedly prompted me to speak loud, and to the purpose. The declaration was read, and was the same as the first, with the alteration of the name of the defendant. I had to prove that the dinner was not a marriage-dinner, because that must, according to rule, have been given at Surat, where the ceremony took place. It was, moreover, necessary to prove we were fully justified in not inviting the plaintiff, even if it were considered a caste meeting. To do this, I could prove the plaintiff had, on a former occasion, been overlooked at a great meeting of the caste at the house of a principal Marwarry, who gave a dinner on the death of his father. Moreover, I could prove the plaintiff an outcast, having committed some fault which rendered him unfit to be admitted among the good and correct men of his tribe. The plaintiff, on the other side, was prepared to rebut this evidence respecting himself. The witnesses on my part were sharply cross-examined by Atchoo, the pleader on Premje's behalf, and we all eyed each other as if life and death depended on the issue of the trial. Goolchund was constantly pulling my sleeve, and proposing many silly

questions to be put to the plaintiff and his witnesses. At length we got so far that I rose to address the court. I stated that I could produce a witness whose testimony would not leave a doubt on the mind of the judge as to the character of the plaintiff; and having heard him, the issue of the trial could not be otherwise than favourable to us. Having spoken to this effect, I cast my glance towards the persons who were looking in at the window, purely from accident; but how can I express the agitation and alarm I felt when, among the group, I recognised Kokoo, with the ass-driver by his side! My papers fell from my hand—I stood without motion. A trembling came over me; and, notwithstanding my client, Goolchund, pulled my sleeve nearly to pieces, my eyes remained fixed on the window, from which I had no power to take them. At length I saw they were gone, and picked up my papers; but I still gazed around me bewildered, until the registrar demanded what was the matter. Goolchund replied, the people at the window disturbed me; upon which they were ordered to retire, and the window was closed. The registrar then called on me to name the important witness I stated I should call. Goolchund named him to me, but I pronounced the name in a most confused manner. He appeared, however, and was sworn in; but I had not a question to put to him—all had been driven from my recollection. I confounded Premje with Goolchund, and *vice versa*. Of these things Atchoo took the advantage, and

urged the badness of my cause from the ill way in which I was able to support it. He pulled my poor witness so to pieces, that he deposed things the very opposite to what I intended he should have done. Goolchund endeavoured to speak, but was not allowed, as I was his vakeel, and only one of us could be heard. At length the judge, tired at the delay and confusion which I had caused, decided in favour of Premje, and ordered Goolchund to pay the sum of five hundred rupees, with costs of suit. After this decision, we of course could not be heard there, but we were told we might appeal to the judge's court if dissatisfied. Thus ended a cause which, had not my attention been called away by the sight of an object so terrible to me and mine as Kokoo, I felt certain I should have gained. I had now to submit to the ill-humour of Goolchund, who hinted I had been bought over by the opposite party. Hurrychund also looked very cool upon me, and was extremely dissatisfied.

On my returning home, Sagoonah inquired what, in the name of Vishnu, could have so paralysed me ; how I failed, and what was the cause of my agitation. She besought me to tell her what it was that struck me speechless in the court. I said, "When you are in danger, my dear Sagoonah, it is impossible I can attend to anything besides." The frightened girl now inquired how she could be discovered in danger in the midst of my pleadings. I communicated to her the cause of my alarm, and that I had

recognised Kokoo, and his companion the driver, at the window of the court-room. I entreated her to keep within doors, and never to exhibit herself in the streets. I also begged her to explain to Hurrychund how I had been alarmed, and the cause of it, which occasioned the loss of his nephew's suit. She promised me I should be reinstated in his favour, for she had great influence over him; and before night came, I found she had performed her promise successfully, for old Hurrychund became as affable and good-natured as before. Goolchund, however, still continued to wear a long face, which he altered a little upon my talking to him respecting his cause; repeating my regret at its failure, which could not have happened under any other circumstances than those which I related to him. I advised him by all means to appeal against the decree of the registrar; for although it was not common for the judge of the upper court to hear fresh evidence on a cause, yet, upon my representing how I had been interrupted in my defence, it was probable he would waive the general custom, as an exception, owing to very peculiar circumstances, and grant the admission of fresh evidence. Goolchund shook me heartily by the hand, and declared he would give notice of appeal on the following day.

When Goolchund quitted me, Nanna came in, full of anxiety, to hear the cause of my failure in court. When I told him, he said he was not surprised at it, for the sight of such an inveterate foe seeking one's life, at all times

appalling, must have been particularly so at such a critical moment, and was enough to bewilder the strongest and most courageous man. Nanna advised me never to go out after it was dark, or venture at any time beyond the city walls. Day after day passed away, and all was quiet: neither Kokoo nor the driver appeared. The appeal case was heard in due course; I having furnished affidavits, stating how I had been interrupted, and that important evidence, which would have decided the cause the other way, had not been heard, the judge granted the request. I was not permitted to plead, because I belonged to the lower court; but the cause was ably conducted. After a long hearing, the decree of the court below was reversed, and Goolchund was successful, to the inexpressible chagrin of Premje and his friends. Old Hurrychund was so pleased at the issue of the appeal, that he gave a nautch* on the occasion, to which all the most respectable of his caste were invited.

* Dance.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

At the nautch mentioned in the last chapter, an excursion to the island of Kubbeer Burr was proposed. This place is situated some way up the river Nerbudda, and is remarkable for being entirely covered by one large banyan tree. The branches of this tree growing downwards, take root, and become each of them a distinct trunk. From these, other branches droop in like manner to the ground, and thus traverse over and shade from the sun an immense space of ground, nearly two thousand feet in extent. It is deliciously refreshing, during the hot weather, to walk under the green arches formed by this tree, and enjoy the shade and coolness. Walk joins to walk, among green festoons, and a labyrinth of leaves and branches. Nothing could be more agreeable than parties made to spend the day on such a spot. The distance was but a pleasant sail, and the relaxation from business, and a due attention to the important duties of eating, drinking, talking, and smoking, were anticipated by all who were to join in the excursion with no small delight. As there was but little preparation necessary, matters were speedily arranged for starting. The

women were to accompany us—a measure which I opposed in vain, dreading the machinations of Kokoo, who, I was convinced, remained lurking in the neighbourhood, waiting a fit opportunity to consummate his nefarious plans. Sagoonah was extremely desirous of seeing the island, and endeavoured to persuade herself there was no danger in going thither, protected as she would be by us and two or three udalut peons. Goolchund's wife and mother were to accompany us, and therefore Sagoonah was determined to venture. Finding argument of no avail, I gave up the point, and prepared for the excursion. It was fixed to take place on the third day after the appeal cause came on. Hurrychund sent everything we could need to the island the day preceding, and spared no expense to render the whole party as comfortable as possible. At an early hour in the morning we set out on our excursion. It happened to be an Hindoo holiday, and no business was transacted at the court-house; so I requested Nanna to accompany us, and we both went, well armed, and, each attended by two armed peons, escorted the females to the boat. It was at the hour of five in the morning, it being necessary to go up with the tide. Owing to the darkness of the hour, which the morning mist increased, it was impossible to distinguish Sagoonah from Beema, Goolchund's wife, their figures were so much alike, and both enveloped in dark shawls. After a few hours' sail we saw the island, to the great joy of Beema and her mother, who were both ill from the boat's

motion. It was agreed that those who were tired of the voyage should land at once, and ramble about the island, or enjoy themselves in the shade. On landing, I was much struck with the remarkable tree, having never seen one half its size in any part of the Deccan. There seemed to me to be a thousand trunks, supporting an immense roof of foliage of a deep green. Not a ray of the sun could penetrate through it; all under it was in shadowy silence. The great drawback to our pleasure was, that the place abounded in snakes, so that we were ever in fear of trampling upon them, and of getting bit. This would not have been the case, however, without frequent warnings, as the boatmen and servants enhanced the danger by marvellous stories of the venom of these reptiles, as proofs that it was more powerful here than in any other part of India. One of them related a tale of a person struck dead at encountering the fiery eyes of an immense serpent covered with hair, that reached in length from one side the island to another. As if to help out the marvellous narration, a large *cobra di capello* brushed away from us among the underwood at the moment, and so alarmed the females, that we moved in another direction, taking a different path, and one more beaten. Our presence in this unfrequented place seemed to cause great consternation among the monkeys and birds, which haunted it in vast numbers, and of all varieties. The screams of the disturbed and affrighted fowls as they flew off, and the chatter and grin of the monkeys, that, peeping amid the branches

of the trees, seemed mocking our power to take them, were highly amusing. Though all creatures besides seemed to flee us, the bat hung by his enormous wings in certain dark hollows of the trees and densely shaded boughs, apparently insensible of our presence. The coolness, and the additional feeling of gloom thrown over the deeper recesses of the foliage, were far from being agreeable on this account. The bats differed much from those which visit our streets and houses in the city, being immensely large, and measuring three or four feet from wing to wing when extended. They call them in the Deccan *wur wagool*. In all my wanderings I never before saw such a sight. They hung with their heads downwards in every direction by hundreds, suspended from small hooks at the extremity of their wings. After a short ramble under this magnificent tree, we found ourselves almost close to the landing-place where our boat lay. Some of the party, while we took rice for our first repast, proposed remaining on the island, and others were for sailing a little further up the river and returning to dinner. Those with whom the water disagreed, naturally were for keeping upon the land. Sagoonah and her aunt were so much pleased with the sail to the island, that they expressed a wish to proceed a short way up the stream, and rejoin their female friends in an hour or two. Sagoonah, her aunt, Nanna, two peons, and myself, therefore embarked to take a little more pleasure on the water. The time passed so pleasantly, that we did not reflect upon the dis-

tance the wind and tide were carrying us. At length the tide turned, and the boatmen advised us to avail ourselves of its assistance, and return to the island. Unfortunately the wind was full in our teeth, and we could make no way but with the oars; our boat also was large and heavy. Not being prepared for this disappointment, and having but three sailors and two oars, one of which afterwards snapped in using it, our progress was very slow. Sagoo-nah's aunt had fortunately a little dried grain and bread with her, of which we partook. Without oars, we were obliged to hoist our sail, and tack and wear, hoping to reach the island before the tide again turned; but in this we were disappointed. We made no distance, and were tossed about to no purpose. The females became ill, and our party was miserable enough. When the tide turned, we were obliged to take down our sail and anchor, to prevent being carried back again; this we did pretty near the shore, and then we consulted what was best to be done. It was now six o'clock in the evening, and we seemed without a possibility of reaching the island, where the rest of our party must be anxiously awaiting us—for await us they must, as there was no other boat to convey them home. I proposed sending the two peons on shore to procure rats, and four stout fellows to row us to the island. The peons set off, while Nanna and myself guarded the females, who were alarmed, and stood much in need of rest. Hour after hour passed away, and it was ten o'clock before the

peons returned, bringing with them only three oars, but no men to assist ; they reported that it was with great difficulty they procured these. There being no remedy, we determined to make the best use of the oars we could, and, weighing anchor, pulled with all our strength against the tide. With every effort we gained but little, till the tide again turned in our favour. This was at twelve o'clock at night. A miserable day of pleasure we had, toiling at our oars, and Nanna vowing he would never go boating again for pleasure. At length we saw lights at the island, and the men set up a loud shout, which was answered by our friends, who were no doubt tired enough. About two o'clock we set our feet on shore, and found all wailing and lamentation. The first person we saw was old Hurrychund, beating his breast and tearing his clothes, at the same time crying, "Oh, my nephew, wife, and her mother, all gone !" I demanded whither. The old man exclaimed, would to Ishwar he knew—"some villains had borne them off." He then demanded where I had been so late, exclaiming every moment, "what a day of pleasure—misery, misery !" I begged him to explain himself, but the old man could only weep and beat his breast. One of the peons whom I had left with the party on the island, to whom I appealed for information, told me that, hour after hour passing by, and not seeing anything of us, they went in parties round different points of the island, to see if they could espy us coming. About six in the evening Hurrychund's nephew,

with his niece and her mother, being absent, he bade them go in quest of them. He did so, and on arriving at the end of the island, was just in time to see a boat push off, well manned, and to hear the screams of the females on board. The boat went against the tide to Broach, but, owing to the number of hands on board, it moved away rapidly. He returned immediately to Hurrychund, and told him what he had seen. The old man was struck dumb with terror and alarm. Pursuit was impossible, for there was no boat, and they became more anxious than ever for our arrival. Hour after hour passed, till it was too late to pursue them, if there were hands and oars to overtake them. Nanna, during the recital, declared his belief that Sagoonah, her aunt, and myself were the persons whom the villains intended to seize ; but that, it being dark, they had not been able to distinguish the one from the other. I fully coincided with Nanna in opinion, and rejoiced at our escape, though I sincerely bewailed the fate of our friends. Hurrychund ordered the boat to return to Broach, as the tide would soon again become adverse, and not a moment should be lost. Having embarked, we rowed, fatigued as we were, and reached the city by five o'clock in the morning, having had twenty-four hours of everything but pleasure. Application was immediately made to the police to pursue the villains who had carried off Hurrychund's relatives. Parties were despatched by land and water to endeavour to obtain tidings of them. Leaving Nanna to watch over

Sagooonah and her aunt, I embarked with a strong party to scour the river, entertaining but a faint hope of success. Well knowing the sanguinary disposition of Kokoo (who, I felt certain, was the agent in the affair), I feared that, finding he had missed his prey, it would instigate him to commit violence on the unhappy persons who had fallen into his clutches. We made inquiry of every boat which came up the stream if the people had seen an open boat well manned, or had heard the screams of women proceeding from any vessel on the river. We were uniformly answered in the negative, and began to despair of obtaining any tidings of Goolchund and his wife. At length we found ourselves opposite a bungalow, or house, built by an English gentleman, who resorted there when sickness rendered a change of air useful, the sea breeze being very sensibly felt at that place. We could not return to Broach until the tide changed, and I determined to go on shore and wait its turn at the bungalow. We accordingly anchored; but no sooner was the anchor dropped, than we were hailed from the bungalow by a voice which I recognised to be Goolchund's. We immediately landed, and joined him at the front of the house, expressing our pleasure at meeting him once more. He bade me come in, and he would tell me all that had happened to them. I eagerly inquired if his wife and her mother were safe; and he answered me by throwing open the door of a room, where I saw them quietly seated on the floor, eating dried grain. They were much

pleased at seeing me, and begged me to sit down by them.

Goolchund now proceeded to relate the circumstances of their capture. They had gone round the island to see if they could find us, or rather to look out for us returning down the river, when they were suddenly seized by a number of men, who bore them to a boat, and put off from the shore. The thing was so sudden that they were all astounded, and it was some time before they could recover themselves. The men rowed with all their force for some miles, until they were past Broach; having taken the precaution to gag the women, and thus prevent their screaming while passing the city walls. A small boat now met them, from which a shrill whistle was heard, and answered by those who were in the boat with us. The little boat then ran alongside ours, and two men came on board us, having a lantern. One of them was a short man, with light hair; the other taller, having a dark complexion. As the light flashed across the boat, I could distinctly perceive our late opponent in the law-courts, Premje, who instantly ordered the light to be put out, and began a very earnest conversation with the short man, who had just entered the boat. Goolchund was seriously alarmed to find himself thus in the power of an enemy, of whose resentment it was impossible to foresee the extent. At length they reached the bungalow, and cast anchor opposite to it. They were then landed, and compelled to walk up the bank to the house, in a room of which they were locked. The villains who had taken them off

prepared to sleep in the hall ; their prisoners also lay down but could obtain no repose, for Goolchund heard one of their guards say, "Do ? why, kill the fellow, to be sure. Did he not try to subject me to the most cruel and lingering death—even to starvation?"—"Impossible!" said another voice, which was Premje's ; "he has never been away from Guzerat in his life."—"Aye, aye ! but I know better," replied the first speaker ; "he shall be food for fishes, on our way to Bombay." Goolchund here made violent knocking at the door, and two men entered the room in which they were confined ; one of them was Premje, and the other a shorter person. They inquired the cause of the uproar. Goolchund informed the short man he had heard their conversation, and was anxious to convince him of his error. He desired him to look in his face with the lantern close, and say if he had ever seen him till then. He did so, and in a moment exclaimed, "Death and fury ! have we had all this trouble for nothing ? What fellow have we here ?" Goolchund then told him his name, and he said, "You will soon, perhaps, be set at liberty ;—but, though disappointed in my man, the women are in my power." Goolchund assured him that one of them was his wife, and the other her mother, entire strangers to him. Upon this the short man called out, "Rajoo ! get up, you lazy rascal ! and come hither instantly !" Upon this the taller man of the two, who had come on board us from the little boat, came in, rubbing his eyes. The short man whispered something to

him, and then bade him approach the females, and say if the young one was not Sagoonah. Goolchund then saw through the whole affair, and comprehended the mistake which had been committed ; and that Sagoonah, her aunt, and myself, were the persons they intended to carry off. The man who had been sleeping approached the females, and, after a minute inspection, cried out, "Alas ! we have caught the wrong birds !" The short man's rage knew no bounds ; taking Premje by the collar, he dashed him with violence against the wall, and hurried out of the bungalow, summoning together his men ; and, going on board, they weighed anchor, and were far away before the morning dawned. It was clear Premje was the agent in this affair, he having a grudge against Goolchund ; and, conceiving him and his wife the persons wanted, he was, doubtless, active enough in his exertions to effect the object in view. Though sorely bruised, he fled from the house, and was not seen there afterwards, nor was it likely he would venture to enter Broach again.

I then explained to Goolchund who the short man was, and that his face had prevented my succeeding in court in gaining his cause ; that I had no doubt of his object being myself ; and that, had he succeeded, I should have been food for fishes too certainly. Goolchund thought I had had a narrow escape, and then bade me explain the cause of our absence from the island, which I did in every particular.

The whole party now embarked in my boat, and one tide carried us back to Broach. We reached the city about six o'clock in the evening. Crowds of persons were in waiting to receive us. The whole city had heard of the outrage committed, and every one was anxious to know where the missing persons had been discovered, and who took them away from the island. I had previously advised Goolchund not to say a word about Premje being concerned, until we had communicated with old Hurrychund ; we therefore reported to the multitude, that we were ignorant of the persons and motives for committing the outrage upon us. This only increased the public curiosity, and many false reports were circulated respecting the affair ; at length the people, by some accident, hit upon the truth, or so much of it as established, that as Premje had been an opponent of Goolchund's in court, and the latter having gained the cause, the former had hired persons to carry off and murder his antagonist and wife. Premje's disappearance from the city at the time caused this statement to be believed. The Marwarry caste crowded around Goolchund, and desired him to swear by the holy cow whether or not Premje was in the plot. Goolchund acknowledged that he had seen Premje in the party which carried himself and his wife away from the island. The Marwarrys, upon this, combined and surrounded Premje's house, which they would have razed to the ground, had not a strong body of police been sent to protect it from their rage. It now became necessary that

Goolchund should proceed to the police court and formally depose against Premje ; this he did, whilst I escorted home the females, and hastened to relieve the anxious mind of old Hurrychund. Thus terminated our pleasure-party to the island of Kubbeer Burr.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN human life one misery is certain to be followed by a train of half a dozen. The discomforture of our excursion to the island was followed by the illness of old Hurrychund, who had been too long exposed to the night air for one of his advanced years. He caught from the damps a severe fever, which in three days carried him off. A funeral, instead of a wedding, was now ordered to be prepared in booths in the front of his house. The sudden demise of the old man was a sad blow to us all. I had myself been fanciful enough to suppose he would recover from the attack ; but, on the third day after it took place, on returning from the court, I saw the kind and emaciated old man stretched on the fatal bed of *cusa** grass, and I was convinced no hope of his recovery remained. The old man was, in fact, death-struck and had no more time allowed him than was sufficient to make a few donations to his surviving friends and relatives. Among the former was Sagoonah's aunt, to whom he bequeathed five hundred rupees.

* When the death of a Hindoo is certain, and no hope remains, he is laid on a bed of grass, called *cusa*.

None of the sacred water of the Ganges being at hand, the ceremony of sprinkling his head was omitted from necessity, but the *sāla grāma* * stone was placed near him, and all the ceremonies preformed which the friendshp of his relations could prompt and had the means of executing. Holy strains were chanted, and sacred hymns poured into the ear of the dying; leaves of hallowed trees were scattered over his head, and every attention religiously paid him in his expiring moments. As soon as he was dead, the body was washed, perfumed, and decked with flowers; a ruby put into his mouth, together with coral, and small pieces of gold thrust into his nostrils and eyes. Goolchund, the nearest relative, as usual, brought the cloth sprinkled with fragrant oil, and threw it over the corpse. Two hours afterwards they conveyed the body to the funeral pile; it was raised up by his relatives, and placed on a wooden bier for the procession. It now moved slowly on, with fire and food borne before it in an unbaked earthen vessel, accompanied by the sound of drums, cymbals, and wind and stringed instruments. The funeral passed out through the eastern gate of the city to its place of destination. The corpse being laid upon a bed of cusa, with its head towards the south, the relatives of the deceased bathed in the river on the banks of which the funeral pile was to be prepared. They then began to mark out lines, upon which the wood

* A small black smooth stone, perforated by worms, or, as the Hindus believe, by Vishnu, in the shape of a reptile.

was placed. The pile being ready, they washed the body, clothed it in clean linen, rubbing it with perfumes, and then placed it on the wood with the head to the north. Goolchund then threw the cloth over the corpse, and taking up a lighted brand, invoked all the holy places, saying, "May the gods, with mouths of fire, consume this body!" He then walked three times round the pile, looked towards the south, and dropping on his left knee, applied a torch to the wood near the head of the corpse, while the attendant priests recited the proper prayers. During the time the wood was consuming, several of the relations of the deceased having taken seven pieces of the wood, walked slowly round the pile and threw them over their shoulders upon the fire, saying, "All hail to thee who consumeth flesh!" All who had followed or touched the body were obliged to walk round the pile, keeping their left hands towards it, but not looking at the fire. They then proceeded to the river, bathed, and returned home in procession, having preformed many minor ceremonies, such as sipping water, &c., too minute to mention. On arriving at the house of the deceased, the funeral cakes were baked, and food put aside on a leaf for the crows. Cake was thrown into the water, and milk and water were suspended at the door of the house in earthen vessels every evening, until the time of mourning expired. This endured for ten days, and mournful days they were to us all.

Sagoonah and her aunt lived with Beema and Anundee her mother, but as the latter intended to go to Surat, it

was necessary to make some new arrangements. At length, Nanna procured lodgings for Sagoonah and her aunt in a very retired quarter of the city, and Beema and her mother took leave of us, and proceeded to Surat, leaving us melancholy enough at their departure. The uncertainty we were in respecting Kokoo was a great drawback upon our comfort. Sagoonah, knowing the imperious necessity for concealment, resigned herself to the alternative of close imprisonment in her lodgings, with a placidity which more than ever incensed me against her persecutors, and raised her still higher in my esteem. Business had become scarce at the court, and I consulted Nanna as to whether we had not better proceed elsewhere to some other court where the Mahratta language was used, whereby we should gain many advantages that Guzerat did not afford us. Nanna being of my opinion, I informed Sagoonah that we intended to proceed to the Northern Concan, in hopes of obtaining practice as pleaders in that court. Neither Sagoonah nor her aunt were particularly desirous of remaining in Broach, and they both acquiesced immediately in our plans for the future. Whether we should proceed by sea or by land was the next point; and we finally fixed upon the latter mode, hoping we should not be molested by Kokoo or his agents. I informed the judge of the reasons which induced me to quit his court. He approved of my plans, and gave me a letter to the judge of the Concan, in which he also recommended Nanna. Just as we were taking leave, the nazir

came running in, reporting that a prisoner had escaped who was employed in working upon the roads ; he had knocked down the guard and disengaged himself of his irons. The judge inquired the name of the man ; and, to my surprise, I found it was Fuzl Khan. "Where did this fellow come from ?" inquired the judge. "He came with these two Mahrattas," was the reply of the nazir, pointing to us. "Indeed !" observed the judge ; "and these two are just going away, and their friend is departed? It appears very suspicious. I fear you have aided the fellow in breaking prison." We were much hurt at such a suspicion, though we could hardly wonder at its being entertained. We most earnestly assured the judge we cared nothing about the fellow, and had taken no interest in his affairs. The judge said there was certainly no proof of our conniving at or assisting in his escape, and he would not detain us. He advised us not to be seen in the fellow's company again on the English territory. We bowed, and retired. On the outside of the court we saw the guard whom Fuzl Khan had knocked down. The poor fellow's teeth were literally driven down his throat. Fuzl had used his irons as the weapon of offence. Nanna observed that he was a desperate man, and I agreed that he was more so than I had apprehended ; but I said I thought he must be speedily retaken. Nanna imagined he was too clever a fellow for that ; but we both agreed never more to have anything to do with him if he came in our way.

Everything being in order, we set out on our journey. Sagoonah and her aunt were seated in a small covered cart drawn by bullocks ; Nanna and myself were mounted upon fatoos. We started at an early hour in the morning, that we might reach Surat at night, resting an hour or two at Khim to refresh our cattle. From the latter place, where we enjoyed a comfortable meal, we set forth again for Surat. The bullocks being knocked up, our journey was delayed so much that darkness came on before we arrived near Surat. We had passed two travellers on the road on foot, who now overtook us, so slow did we proceed. These two men seemed very suspicious characters ; if we stopped they did the same, and sometimes they kept up with us by running. Nanna was convinced they were not common travellers, but had some sinister motive for thus following us. We watched them narrowly ; but as they did not offer to molest us in any way, we took no other notice of them, and soon entering Surat, we hoped to lose sight of them entirely. In this, however, we found ourselves mistaken ; for while we were assisting the women to alight from the carriage at a comfortable lodging which Nanna had procured, the two travellers posted themselves one on each side of the door, and having seen us enter, hastened away down the street. "Who can these fellows be ?" inquired Sagoonah. "They once opened the cloth which covered the carriage, and peeped in." I swore, by Ishwar, had I known this before I would have prevented their ever

attempting it a second time. I requested her not to be alarmed, as we should keep a good look-out. I endeavoured to persuade her they would probably cease to follow us any further, as Surat might be the place of their destination. Notwithstanding all I said, Sagoonah was evidently alarmed. Nanna and myself agreed to keep guard by turns outside her chamber, and to strike down any one who might attempt to enter or to molest us.

After we had dined, Nanna went out to hire fresh cattle for the ensuing day; and on his return, the females retired to their apartment. Nanna took post at their door for the first half of the night. At one o'clock he awoke me, saying all was quiet. I took his place, and remained there until morning; but nothing occurred to disturb us. The cattle were ready; and, having taken breakfast, we once more set out, unattended by any prying travellers, so that I began to hope we had rid ourselves of them entirely. Nousarry was the first stage, and there we thought of remaining all night, the females complaining of fatigue. What was my surprise, on alighting, to find the two mysterious travellers posted there! and before I could demand the reason of their thus molesting us, they were off. This conduct was now a subject of serious alarm to us all, and I determined, should they follow us to Damaun, to take some measures for eluding them. We also thought it prudent to travel only by short stages in the day, so as not to run the risk of being benighted. In this manner we proceeded, and were sure

to behold the travellers posted at the durhm sallah where we alighted. At length we reached Damaun, a large fortified place belonging to the Portuguese. As before, the two men were watching our arrival there. On seeing this, I thought it high time to consult on some method of eluding their watchfulness, and therefore determined on taking a boat and proceeding by sea the rest of the distance. We could never have a better opportunity than at Damaun, for it was a seaport, and boats of all sorts were riding in the harbour. The travellers, conceiving we should still proceed by land, would set out before us, as they had hitherto invariably done, and would be at a loss when they missed us at the following stage. This plan was agreed to. Nanna went and hired a boat as secretly as possible, and early in the morning we went on board and set sail. The boat we had hired was called a pattamar: it was a large one, and had a cabin for the females. On the third day we saw Bassein, the chief place in the Northern Concan, whither I determined on going. A better boat than ours for sailing came after us, as we supposed from Surat, and hailing us, asked whither we were bound? I desired the tindal, or steersman, to answer, "Bombay." The strange boat now ran so close to us that I could recognise the faces of all on board; and what was my vexation in discovering the two men who had before followed us, muffled up in dark shawls! It thus seemed impossible to avoid them. Nanna proposed shooting them; but aware of the consequences

of such a proceeding on the territory of the English, I begged him not to think a moment of such a step. The strange boat now passed us, and I desired the tindal to put into Bassein, which he had no sooner done, than I had the mortification to see the strange boat put about, and run for the same port. "We must submit," I observed ; "let the fellows follow us if they will; we must be prepared for them, and what more can be done?"

We landed at Bassein, procured lodgings, and, as early as convenient, I presented my letter to the English gentleman there, who, on perusing its contents, advised me to proceed to Thannah ; the court was held there, and he was going to that place in a very short time, and would then do all in his power for me. In consequence of this we left Bassein, and reached Thannah by water, seeing nothing of the two men, who, I hoped, had departed. At Thannah we waited until the judge arrived, when I made my salaam to him ; and he promised me a vakeelship as soon as a vacancy occurred, which he daily expected. It happened, unfortunately, that an old inhabitant of Thannah was candidate for the place also, and in consequence, I was regarded with an evil eye ; and I even heard that some plan was on foot to ruin my expectations. One day the judge sent for me, and said, "So you wish to be a pleader, do you?" I replied in the affirmative. "Why," said he, "you must be the most impudent fellow in the world ! I understand you were once a common peon in Bombay, engaged in a dread-

ful conspiracy to murder the treasurer, and was, in consequence, expelled from the island!" I denied it stoutly, and said it was all a base fabrication of my enemies, and the man who was a candidate for the pleader's place. "Well," said the judge, "we will see; call in the man who says he will swear to this would-be vakeel." A man now came forward whom I knew to be one of the mysterious travellers; he was wrapped up in his coarse black shawl. On approaching the judge he uncovered himself and made a salaam, which afforded me an opportunity of seeing his face. The features were familiar to me, but I could not call to mind where I had seen them, or on what occasion. The judge asking his name, he replied it was Gumbia. This was enough to enable me to remember that he was the very man expelled from Bombay with myself, and who left me to return thither and search for my treasure. I now felt that my hopes of the place here were frustrated. The fellow deposed to a thousand falsehoods; swore he himself was in the plot, and was expelled Bombay at the same time that I was, and for the same crime. The judge said he also conceived it his duty to send me from Thannah, and desired me to go in two days' time, or he should be forced to compel me to do so. This was a fatal blow; but what was to be done but to obey? I returned home, and as I entered the house the traveller Gumbia overtook me, and giving me a fiendish grin, hurried away. I did not relate to Nanna or to the females the reason of my failure;

but informed them the judge had preferred another man, and it was desirable we should all proceed to the Deccan once more.

After my failure I had some conversation with Sagoonah relative to my hopes respecting herself. I told her, on our arrival in the Deccan, I was determined to discover whether the boy to whom she had been betrothed was living or not! If I could satisfactorily prove this, I demanded whether she would longer refuse me the right of affording her legal protection. She put her hand into mine, saying, "But prove he is no more, and this hand is yours." I then told her we must proceed to Satarah, for there only could anything be learned that was satisfactory upon this subject, so important to us both. "What!" cried Sagoonah, "to Satarah? to my rich uncle, who will take me from your protection?"—"Not so," I said; "he must not be acquainted of your being there."—"He will—he will know!" replied Sagoonah; "I must not even accompany you to the Deccan. My aunt and I will proceed to Bombay, and await tidings of you there." I could not but acknowledge the good sense of this arrangement. To prevent their being followed to Bombay, Nanna hit upon a most ingenious scheme, by which the two spies, cunning as they were, must be infallibly deceived. His plan was to procure two other women for hire, and get them into the house over-night. In the morning these women, muffled up, were to accompany us across the river to the Mahratta

country. The travelling-spies would follow us as usual, imagining the women to be the same who accompanied us from Guzerat. Sagoonah and her aunt might then set off for Bombay, where they might provide themselves lodgings ; for it would occasion suspicion were he or I to go there for that purpose, and return again. We all thought this an admirable plan, and agreed to adopt it without delay. Nanna procured two women, as like Sagoonah and her aunt in figure as possible, and got them slyly into the house. They willingly engaged in our service when we imparted to them the business for which they were wanted, and accepted our terms ; but they could not help expressing their wonder at the reason of our taking them to Satarah with us, merely to send them back again. We promised to explain the why and wherefore at some future time ; and we kept them shut up for the night, so that they might not guess there were any other females than themselves in the house. Nanna proceeded to the bazaar, and openly demanded bullocks and tattoos for the following morning. On returning, he informed me that one of the spies was at the kotwall's office when he gave orders for the beasts ; and that we might rely upon it, they would be near us on our march next day.

This was the last night of my being happy in the presence of Sagoonah ; for all I knew, it might be the last time of my life ! The next day we were to be separated from each other ; and who knew but it was for ever ? We neither of us closed our eyes until the hour of parting came. I agreed

to let her hear from me by a messenger, so as not to ti
to letter-communication ; and the more, as she could
read, and must get that done for her, which might put oth
in possession of our secrets. She desired me to send
messenger to Sunkersette Baboolsette, the great goldsm^m
at Bombay, and inquire for her under the name of Bee
Bhae, and the messenger would receive proper directic
where to find her. I thought this method the best th
under the circumstances, could be devised, as I could thi
at any time, be certain of her being concealed, and yet co
municate anything I wished to her. Not liking that
should be seen taking leave of each other, we parted at da
break, with heavy hearts. I then threw myself for a fe
minutes on a mat, endeavouring to compose myself, befo
Nanna called me to set out upon our journey.

CHAPTER XXX.

NANNA soon came to me, and bade me get ready to start. We set off on foot, with the two women muffled up; and crossing the river, found bullocks and tattoos in readiness on the opposite banks. The drivers led us through passes, over hills and rugged places, till, after a fatiguing journey, we reached Campowley—a small village at the foot of the Ghauts. The heat here being intolerable, we determined to set off again as early as possible the following morning. The spies had not made their appearance during the whole of the preceding day. This gave us considerable alarm, fearing our plot might have been discovered, and the women were still watched by the villainous agents of our foes. I began to fancy Sagoonah and her aunt pursued by them to Bombay, or, what was even more to be feared, prevented from reaching that place. Our fears on this head were fortunately groundless; for in the morning, when we arrived on the summit of the Ghauts, we saw the two spies in conversation together. Turning round, and seeing us approach, they walked forwards at a rapid rate. We congratulated ourselves on the success of our plot, and cautioned the two

women, should we pass the men who had gone forward, to muffle themselves up carefully, and with evident fear and perturbation. They promised obedience ; and, having baited our cattle, and taken some refreshment ourselves at Candal (a village on the summit of the Ghauts), we once more journeyed onwards. The fresh breeze from the Deccan was most exhilarating after the heat of the lower land, and both Nanna and myself were charmed at once more setting foot in our own country. Before we reached the next stage we passed the two travellers, who were sitting under a tree eating dried grain. The women, as they had promised to do, muffled themselves up in apparent haste ; and we saw the men cast very significant glances at each other as we went by. I now imagined Gumbia's companion to be the mischievous ass-driver, as, from his height and figure, he very much resembled him.

We reached Poona on the following day, and the two spies were, as usual, posted at the door where we alighted. The women entered the house, well muffled up, and then the two scoundrels went their way. On my way to Satarah I had no occasion to visit Poona ; but I thought it prudent to ascertain, in the best way I was able, the state of affairs at Satarah before I went thither. I found that the rajah was still very ill, and that the pretender, Gunput Rao, though he was acknowledged by the English, was opposed by another man, who declared himself to be his elder brother, but who had not yet appeared publicly in that character.

His name alone, it was reported at Poona, had enlisted many persons on his side ; and that, in consequence, Gunput Rao had been raising soldiers to crush the elder brother as a pretender. The latter had assembled a valiant body of troops to support his own cause ; but the two parties were not likely to come to blows until the decease of the present rajah. The name of the claimant to the Satarah musnud, by right of his seniority, was Sevaje ; and the people guessed he was concealed somewhere near Satarah. I was advised, if I went to that place, to be as silent as possible in regard to political affairs, as there were many bloodthirsty villains abroad, who found means to get rid of all who spoke adverse to the party they supported, whenever opportunity was favourable for it. I pretended everywhere at Poona the utmost indifference as to the different claimants to the musnud. I stated to those of whom I made inquiry, that I was going to Satarah merely to seek employment, and that I should enter into the service of neither of the parties striving for the mastery. Nanna advised me not to proceed to Satarah, because Kokoo was no doubt there, with Gunput Rao ; and his disappointment again respecting the women would cause him to seek me out more perseveringly, and to sacrifice me to his vengeance. This advice was worth regarding ; and, having made Nanna fully acquainted (as his conduct warranted me in doing) with the circumstances of Sagoonah, I begged him to go to Satarah, and make every inquiry possible respecting the youth to whom

she had been betrothed. I agreed to remain in Poona, a
await his return.

The foregoing plan being fixed upon, Nanna prepared set out. He proposed that we should start together; and when the two spies were some way on the road before us, should suddenly return to Poona with one of the women. Nanna, when he overtook the travellers, was to cry aloud to them for protection, declaring a gang of rogues had forcibly taken away his companion and one of the females. The woman with Nanna was to play her part, by crying, tearing her hair, and other symptoms of grief. By this means there could be no doubt but the spies would be deceived. The travellers would not think of returning to Poona, but would imagine the pretended ruffians were some of their own gang employed by Gabbage or Kokoo. If that should be the case, they would most likely proceed to Satarah at once; and should they seize the woman, it was time enough then for them to find out their mistake, and let her go again. The plan appeared to me useful for confusing the two emissaries; and we all left Poona the following day, concluding the travellers, as usual, were on before us. At the part of the road agreed upon, I turned back with the youngest woman to Poona. Unfortunately, this day the spies were behind us instead of being in front, as we made sure they were. After travelling a few hours back, we met them face to face. The woman muffled up, and so did I; but they recognised us, and stood and looked after us for some time.

The separation seemed to confuse them, and they appeared to hesitate which party they should follow—Nanna's or mine. I left them, however, in apparent uncertainty; for both the woman and myself being mounted on tattoos, we flogged the animals, and set off in good speed to Poona—the beasts quickening their pace, as they knew it was their road home. By this means we left the travellers a good distance behind us in a few minutes after we had started. On arriving at Poona, I dismissed the woman, after paying her the stipulated reward. She was a stranger to her companion who had gone forward to Satarah; and I was careful to recommend her immediate return to Thannah, in order to prevent any intelligence being obtained from her respecting myself, if she remained in Poona, where I designed to sojourn for a short time. The woman took my rupees gratefully, and we parted.

The first step I took was to change my appearance as much as possible. I got shaved, and disguised myself as well as I could, and then sought a very retired lodging. In the house in which I fixed myself lived a hanger-on at the court of the English collector. This collector was an officer of the army, collector, and judge at the same time. A desire from my past experience and knowledge of the law at Broach, led me to examine into the state of its administration at Poona upon finding I possessed such an opportunity, and having, moreover, little or nothing else to occupy my time. My fellow-lodger, like many others, gained a livelihood by knavery and chicanery in the arbitration suits; he held his

nocturnal meetings, and met his arbitration-gangs at all hours of the night. His name was Loochajee, and he managed to be concerned in almost every cause. His intentions, in this respect, were admirably seconded by the prevailing system of administering justice by arbitration. He contrived to enrich himself by plundering both plaintiffs and defendants. I will endeavour to give my readers an account of the system of punchayet or arbitration, said to be far superior to the system of justice enforced in Guzerat, which I have elsewhere explained. It will then be easy to judge which of the two systems is best adapted to afford real and substantial justice. At Poona there was no regular judge, as in the courts of Guzerat;—a collector of the revenue, with two assistants, was expected to do everything. In the administration of justice he obtained the assistance of a punchayet, consisting of five arbitrators—a plan said to be highly approved of by the natives, it being their own customary mode of settling disputes; but, if a better mode were pointed out, it does not seem to me that they would despise it. Trials by punchayet flourished most during the power of the great Poona minister, Nanna Furnavese, when no files of undecided suits were ever heard of. The difference between that time and more recent ones was, that then three-fourths of the declarations of suits were never allowed to be put on the file—a very simple method of keeping it clear. Under the English, almost every plaint was admitted and referred to arbitration; the consequence of this being, that a sufficient

number of persons to sit on arbitrations could not be found ; and those who did sit had no pay, either from the litigating parties or from the Government. A few respectable merchants and others had no objection to sit now and then upon a punchayet ; but it could not be expected that such would sit every day in the year, and leave their own concerns entirely to settle the business of others gratis. Even supposing they were paid for their services, the fee would most likely fall short of the profits arising from their own exertions in their daily avocations. A marked man, or having the reputation of ability, would be constantly called upon. The punchayet consists of two persons named by the plaintiff, and two by the defendant, the Government nominating the fifth or umpire. The latter I never could discover to be of much use. He was designed to see fair play, and prevent delay ; but in the event of two arbitrators being for the plaintiff and two for the defendant, the case could only be settled by the umpire, who was always expected to decide it one way or another. If he allowed an award that was unjust, he was called to account for it. If he reversed or interfered with the opinions of the two arbitrators, either for plaintiff or defendant, he was severely censured for so doing. His office was thus completely neutralised. At length, no respectable natives would sit as arbitrators ; and the court was, in consequence, haunted by fellows like my fellow-lodger, Loochajee—men who could write and read, and were respectable, as far as external appearance went, but in reality were depraved and

unprincipled. By such men came, at last, to be decided the claims of the inhabitants of Poona for justice. The method by which they turn their trade to account is, by first securing a large retaining fee from the disputants who nominate them, and then they contrive to follow up the first fee by numerous others ; so that the richest man is almost sure to win his cause. Oftentimes the arbitrators are all in league, and divide whatever comes to the net in equal portions—in this case they apply themselves to *sumjao*, the defendant. In Poona this word has several meanings—such as, to buy a person over, to talk over, or to persuade ; but it is meant also to threaten an individual, and in that sense it is generally used by the arbitrators when in combination. The different arbitrators come to the defendant, and state that they have determined he shall pay to the plaintiff a certain sum of money. He objects, and they tell him he had better comply, and say before the umpire that he is satisfied ; for if he does not, they will fix the sum to be paid at double the amount, and then he must pay, or go to a gaol by their decree. This is denominated the *sumjaoing system* ; and the poor defendant has the option of paying a comparatively small sum of money by his own free-will and consent, or of agreeing to be ruined by a decree of the court. The arbitrators having been well feed on both sides before they read a paper in the cause, put on their lawyer-like looks, and lead the unlucky defendant before the umpire in the court-room. The foreman of the party presents the decree, and the umpire asks if the

party is satisfied. The poor devil, knowing the power of the arbitrators, joins his hands, and answers, "Ho, m,ha, raj,"—yes, my lord. He is then ordered to pay the money forthwith, and the arbitrators, like my fellow-lodger, retire to hunt down fresh game. Should these men be at any time detected in their malpractices, it is a matter of indifference to them, as they have no character to lose; and should they be marked out and never employed again, they think themselves lucky in having made what they have contrived to secure.

Another class of persons, who I found turn a penny by the sale of justice, are the hangers-on of some inferior offices of the courts, who just cook up cases, and then make the disputants believe that, through their interest, their cause will be admitted without delay. The Mahrattas, well aware of the difficulty that existed under their old government of getting heard, think that the same difficulties exist under the new, which is contrary to the fact. An agent sat daily to receive petitions, not one of which was presented without a gratuity being paid to some hanger-on in the court, who had pretended to the petitioner he either will or has spoken to the officer of justice in his favour, and that he may advance and lay his document safely on the table, and rely it will be received and attended to in consequence of their interference. In Guzerat, where the government receives all fees for admitting suits according to the amount sued for, every one knows what he has to pay on filing his

suit; and, at all events, feels confident it will be attended to in turn. Notwithstanding all the pretended advantages of the arbitration system, the files of causes were soon found swelling to a prodigious size; for, though there were two or three gangs of arbitrators appointed, they were so dilatory that business accumulated faster than they despatched them. But, though little was effected in the way of despatch, these judges were ever ready to take a fresh fee or a new cause. Thus, my fellow-lodger had twenty cases on hand at once, on all of which he had taken care to pocket the money. Should he be detected, he well knew he was safe on the credit side of the account, while his clients would have to fee his successor, and be duped twice over. At length, a gentleman was appointed to the office who saw into the devices of this class of men. They determined, however, to get rid of him at all hazards. They collected together charges against him that were groundless in themselves, but which they offered to substantiate; and he was recalled, for their benefit and his own ruin.

A military individual was placed at the head of the civil department at Poona; another of the same profession at Satarah, Ahmednugur, and Kandeish; these were selected for their knowledge of the Mahrattas and their language. Yet this could hardly be true; for I heard of far better scholars in the two Concans, who could write a Mahratta letter and read an answer in that tongue; whereas not one of these military Englishmen in the Deccan could under-

stand the contents of a letter unless it were read to him by an attendant clerk! In consequence, the latter might read whatever he pleased to make the contents of the document in his hand to be. In the Concan, gentlemen not of the military profession conducted all their business in the Mahratta tongue; while those of the Deccan transacted theirs in bad Hindustanee, so as not to be comprehensible to either Deccan, Brahmin, or Deccan Coombie.' The former were therefore infinitely better fitted for the purpose of judges than the latter, and it seemed to me bad policy in the government not to see this. As to the punchayet system, it will not do, if the English wish to distribute justice to the inhabitants, and do not wish to discourage applications for redress, and thus force the people to settle their own differences among themselves. I found those civil-military men so eager to call in arbitrators, that they proceeded to try criminal as well as civil cases by them. The folly of this, however, became too apparent to be long allowed, and the government issued its orders to discontinue the trial of criminals by this method.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AFTER remaining in Poona some weeks, and hearing nothing from Nanna, I became very anxious respecting the future, and finally determined to set off for Satarah myself. I was convinced something very unexpected had occurred to prevent my receiving tidings from that quarter. Delay, too, was prejudicial to my future views; and therefore, muffling myself up one dark evening, and taking my sword and dagger, I left Poona, travelled all night for better concealment, and in the morning crept into a shed, eating only bread and dried grain. I left my hiding-place at night, and again proceeded onwards, thus effectually concealing my movements. On the morning of the third day I reached Satarah, where I found everything quiet. One evening I went into a temple to make pùja to the god; I stayed a much longer time than was customary, because I imagined I might hear something interesting respecting public affairs from the people who repaired thither. In this expectation I was disappointed, as I heard nothing that could be of the least service to me. The bell tolled before I prepared to leave the consecrated spot, and the small lamp burning

before the image expiring, all was darkness. I groped my way towards the threshold, and had just crossed it when the sound of voices struck my ear. It was evident the persons speaking intended to enter the temple, not to make pùja to the god, but to discuss some secret transaction. As I imagined their conversation might relate to politics, I became anxious to gain some information ; and having just sufficient time to do so unobserved, I re-entered the temple and concealed myself in a corner. The two persons entered, and seated themselves in the centre of the building. One of them began by exclaiming, "So you are just as clever a fellow as your companion ; you have been all this time at Poona, and have not found out that Pandurang Hàrì !"—"What could I do ?" replied the other fellow, whom I knew to be Gumbia ; "he eluded me, as I before explained to you."—"Shame on you," observed the first speaker, whom I knew to be Kokoo, "to dog them all the way from Guzerat, and then to lose sight of them within two days' march of Satarah ! Then, again, your sagacious companion, the bullock-driver, to bring us a woman no one ever saw or heard of before—an old hag, that it would be common charity to drown ! Sagoonah is no doubt in Poona, and that devil Pandoo is with her. You say you met them returning thither, and pursued them, and that your companion pursued the other man and woman, whom nobody knows or cares about. However, I shall take good care of the man, and will not release him until he gives me infor-

mation whereby I may secure his friend and Sagoonah."— "We shall get them yet," said Gumbia ; "there is plenty of time yet to"——"Dolt, idiot!" cried Kokoo, "there is not a moment to be lost. Who knows but the rajah may die to-morrow? and has not Sagoonah's uncle declared he will not advance a rupee to Gunput Rao until the latter shall produce his niece and she is married to Mahadeo? This Sevaje is also supposed to be in Satarah, ready to produce his claims to the throne; how, then, is there time to spare? Now what stupid wretches have you two been!"— "Not so fast," cried Gumbia ; "did you never miss catching the birds yourself at Broach?"—"Yes," said Kokoo, "because I depended on that sneaking villain, Premje. Would I had knocked out his brains!"—"Perhaps you have," observed Gumbia. "I fear not," said Kokoo. "Have you any tidings respecting Sevaje, or his place of concealment?"—"None," was the reply. "That is the old answer," said Kokoo ; "done nothing and know nothing and still expect to be paid! I see it is useless to trust such scoundrels as you are. Gunput Rao must be independent of the rich banker, and strike a blow with the means he already has in his possession."—"He will fail then," said Gumbia. "Scoundrel! say that again," retorted Kokoo, "and it shall be your death. He shall not fail; though we wade through rivers of blood, either he or his son shall sit on the Satarah musnud."—"But Sevaje has a party also," said Gumbia. "He has," replied Kokoo, "and

they march to-morrow night for a stronghold to the southward, and will be cut to pieces on the way. Do you know the fortress where they now are?"—"Yes," replied Gumbia, "on the high hill, eight coss from hence."—"Well, then," observed Kokoo, "they quit that place, and must pass through deep ravines. Our troops will meet them hemmed in there, and annihilate the presumptuous followers of the unwary Sevaje. Hasten you to Hossein, my brave Mohammedan lieutenant, and bid him prepare and meet me on the open plain at noon to-morrow." The two villains then left the temple.

I determined, as soon as I could, to proceed to the hill-fortress, and apprise the garrison of the designs of Kokoo. I left my hiding-place much grieved at finding Nanna had fallen into the hands of our enemies. It was more than probable Gabbage would again see him, and, remembering his former conduct towards him, complete that which it was not his fault was not finished when he stabbed him in the cave. I should have been most happy to overhear the place of his confinement; but Kokoo did not mention it and it was impossible for me to make the discovery without some cue. I felt sure Nanna would never betray me or Sagoonah. I could only hope that chance might conduct me to the place where he was detained, and that I might, by some means or other, be enabled to effect his liberation. I was not at an equal loss to know where the troops of Sevaje were posted, and I accordingly hastened to the hills,

on the summit of the highest of which stood a strong fortified tower. I ascended the rugged path that led to the gates of the fort. On arriving at them, I knocked for admittance, and an old man thrust out his head from a loop-hole over the door, and inquired who had disturbed his slumbers. "Slumbers!" I answered, "who would expect to find any one asleep within these walls? If this be the case, awaken the garrison, and let me have an audience of the commandant."—"That thou hast already," said the old man, "and for one very good reason—I am the only person it contains."—"What!" I cried, "are not the troops within?"—"No, I tell you," said the old fellow; "they left me in the dead of night."—"Then all is safe," I exclaimed; "I came to apprise them of their danger on their march through the ravines."—"They must then, by this time, have met with it or avoided it," observed the old man: "but who are you that appear to be so vastly knowing, and unaccountably kind to our troops?"—"Hush!" I replied, in a whisper; "this is no place for politics. If you will admit me into the fort"——"Stay a minute," cried the wary old fellow; "you do not take me for such an ass, do you? Get you gone from hence instantly, or you shall have a match-lock bullet or a Bheel's arrow after you! Ho! begone." So saying, he pointed the muzzle of a matchlock through a loop-hole towards me, which caused me to use no little expedition in getting away. I made the trusty old guard a salaam when I got at random-shot distance, and soon reached the plain.

Whether the troops had left the fortress or not, I could not presume to decide. It was probable the guardian there had misinformed me on purpose, conceiving me a spy in the employ of Gunput Rao. Knowing Kokoo was in Satarah, and seeing little chance of obtaining intelligence respecting the youth to whom Sagoonah had been betrothed, I determined upon taking advantage of the present moment to proceed to Indore, in hopes of once more falling in with the goatherd of the glen, or of gaining some intelligence respecting him from his friend Shewdhut Wanee, to whom he had before referred me. It was the current report that Sevaje (whom I had strong reason for believing to be my old friend the goatherd) was concealed at Satarah. This, however, was but report, and there was no chance of my arriving at a certainty upon the subject, without proceeding to Indore and making the needful inquiry, and learning if he were really at Satarah, how I was to discover him. I had no time to lose, and there fore I travelled as fast as I could towards the city, for I had no money to hire tattoos ; and, after a six days' laborious march, I entered Indore. I had expended my last rupee ; and, hungry and wretchedly fatigued, I presented myself before Shewdhut Wanee. A thousand times I regretted having fallen in with the Bheels, and being plundered of the silver ring given me by the goat-herd. I felt that the friends of the old man were obliged to be exceedingly cautious respecting their knowledge of him, circumstanced as he must be ; and that, without some un-

deniable proof of my acquaintance with him, I should not be trusted even by Shewdhut. Upon my requesting an audience of Shewdhut, a lean meagre form lifted up his head from his account-books, and said, "I am Shewdhut Wanee, brother; what do you want?" I replied I came in search of an old man, for whom I had a sincere regard; who bade me, should I wish to communicate with him, apply here. "Old man! apply to me!" cried Shewdhut; "why, I don't keep old men!"—"You are right," said I, "to be cautious; but, rely upon it, I am no deceiver; for this old man gave me a ring (which I described to Shewdhut), and said that, upon showing it, you would conduct me to him." Upon my saying this, he shut his book, and, looking me very closely in the face, beckoned me to follow him into the interior of his dwelling. I obeyed, and Wanee, upon our being seated, held out his hand for the ring, which he bade me produce. I was now compelled to relate by what unforeseen accident I had been deprived of this valuable token of my identity. I ended by expressing my hopes that my description of the old man, and of the ring he had given me, would be a sufficient proof to him that I was no deceiver, but a sincere friend, who panted to serve the recluse with all my heart. The Wanee would not refuse me his confidence, but he gave it me very warily and cautiously. He said he recollects the recluse had mentioned to him something about a young man whom he was anxious to see; but that, it being a long time ago, he had quite forgotten

what he said. "You must know, young man," continued Shewdhut, "that the person you seek is not in Indore." I told him I expected as much; but I asked if he was not at Satarah? Wanee said he was, and he was about to join him there; and if I would go also, he would be my guide. This was singularly fortunate for me, and I expressed my readiness to attend him thither immediately. He proposed to leave Indore in two days, and I promised to be punctual in my attendance upon him for that purpose.

Before I rose to depart, I begged Wanee to inform me whether the relations of Sawunt Rao, my old benefactor, were still in Indore. "They are," said he; "but how dost thou know these people?"—"I knew Sawunt Rao," said I, "and served in his army."—"Indeed!" observed Wanee, "and what is your name?" I replied, "Pandurang Hàrì." He then asked if I was Sawunt's adopted son, and if he left me any money when he died. I answered according to the facts, adding, that I must except a kurdoorah chain found on me when I was a child. Wanee then inquired where the chain was, and I told him it remained with the relatives of Sawunt. "It must be!" said Wanee to himself, musing as if about some mystery. "Young man, you must possess yourself of this chain, and take it with you to Satarah. Ask me no questions. But stay—it may not be! yet it is strange—an embossed chain, say you?" I nodded in the affirmative, very naturally wondering at the same time to what all the mystery tended. He then bade me

describe the clasp. I replied it had a snake's head, with two rubies for eyes. "It is what I thought!" said Wanee; "we must be off to-morrow, my young friend. He who first bound that chain round your loins pants to behold you." I asked who that was, with some eagerness. Wanee answered, "He whom you seek; the recluse of the glen—your father!"—"The recluse, the old goat-herd, my father?" I exclaimed. "O good Wanee, bring me to him; let me clasp him to my heart! Have I, indeed, found a parent? Say, is it Sevaje?"—"Silence! let not that name pass your lips. Walls have ears," said Wanee, "and whispers are often carried upon the air: silence alone is security. It is the same whom you knew—the goat-herd, the recluse; and ere long he will welcome you as a king and a father!"—"Then Ishwar be praised!" I rejoined, "and nerve my arm to crush all his enemies. Has my father given up every hope of finding me?" I inquired. "He has long since despaired of doing so," said Wanee: "often has he conversed with me upon the fatal events which tore you from him; and has frequently alluded to the embossed chain, which he himself fastened around your waist on the dreadful night of your separation." I then demanded if Wanee had all along been the friend of my unfortunate parent; he answered in the affirmative, and that he saved my father's life; but bade me seek to know no more at that moment. "Yes," I cried, "I must hear more. Did my father mention a girl who was betrothed to me?" Wanee replied that he did. I

eagerly demanded "if he knew her name."—"This," said Wanee, "I never heard him mention. But from him you shall yourself learn more, if, indeed, as you appear, you are in reality his son. Let us hasten to regain your chain, and then push on to Satarah, where your father now sojourns."—"Thanks," I cried, "my best friend! and may the great Dum reward you for all your goodness!"

We set out accordingly for the house of Sawunt Rao's widow, and being introduced into her apartment, I made myself known to her. She arose immediately, and welcomed me with much sincerity. After I had made inquiries respecting the health of her family as well as her own, I asked her respectfully for the silver chain left me by her husband. She desired us to seat ourselves, and withdrew, saying she had not forgotten her promise to take care of it for me. In a few minutes she returned with it in her hand. Shewdhut examined the silver kurdoorah minutely, and declared openly his opinion it was the identical chain he had so often heard spoken of before. He desired the widow to tell him what her husband said when he presented me with the chain. The widow replied, that he said he bequeathed the chain to me, because it had been found on my person when a child and he had preserved it in the hope it might lead to a discovery of my parents. Shewdhut observed that he was now convinced all his surmises were correct respecting me. The widow expressed her hope I should soon discover my friends, and was curious to learn whether I had already found

any cue to my parents. Wanee said he hoped we had, but that it would be wrong to be too sanguine, and that she should in due time be made acquainted with the result of our inquiries.

Wanee now requested me to return with him to his dwelling to sleep that night, saying he had a comfortable apartment for the accommodation of his friends. Sleep, as it may naturally be supposed, was a stranger to my eyes; and I lay all night restless and haunted with reflections on the strange disclosures which that day had brought to light by means of Shewdhut Wanee. I could not believe it possible that I, a poor houseless wanderer, could be the lawful successor to a musnud; that in a short time I should clasp a father to my heart, when I had been so many years a desolate outcast; this was a happiness which I never could have conjectured to be in store for me! I moreover reflected that it was probable I was the being to whom Sagoonah had been betrothed; for though Wanee did not recollect the name of the girl, I felt almost convinced it could be no other. This idea was the source of infinite delight. Was it a delusion? It might be, but it was much more probably a reality, than my being the son of Sevaje, and a prince. When I reflected upon my affinity to Gabbage, I shuddered at his crimes, and thought how little I imagined, when listening to Mahadeo's tale in the Pindaree fort, that the relater was my cousin, who had sworn to persecute me. These reflections kept me awake during the

whole night; and, as soon as it was morning, I went to the door of Shewdhut's room. Not hearing him stir, I called out, and was answered by his wife, of whom I demanded whether her husband was ready. She replied, he had been gone out an hour before. "Gone," said I, "and not called me? Impossible."—"He went to the temple," replied the woman, alarmed, "to make pùja, intending to return and summon you to attend him on his journey to Satarah." I inquired how long it was since he left his chamber; and she answered, "A full hour." I ran immediately to the temple. The morning was clear and beautiful; and with breathless haste I entered the edifice—but I could find no Shewdhut there, and I was leaving the place in despair, when, to my surprise and horror, I discovered spots of blood upon the pavement. Some one, it immediately struck me, had murdered him, and carried off his body.—How was I doomed to bitter disappointment! The motive which led to such an act could not be plunder, it was evident; for at such a time it was not likely Wanee would have had money about his person. I searched everywhere around the temple without effect. The traces of blood disappeared at the entrance of the building, so that on the exterior there was no mark or track to direct the pursuit. I hastened back to Shewdhut's wife; and, with tears in my eyes, related what I had seen, and my fears of the worst having happened. I bade her hope, however, that it might not be the blood of her husband, and that he might still return. She began immediately to

beat her breast and tear her hair, screaming in so frantic a manner at the same time, that her neighbours rushed in from all quarters to demand the cause of her loud lamentations. "Oh ! my husband, my husband !" were the only words she could utter ; while I informed the by-standers of the event which we had too much reason to fear must have happened, requesting some of them to accompany me, and try if we could get any further tidings of Wanee, who, if alive, it was reasonable to surmise could not be very far distant. All bewailed the fate of their late neighbour, but not one volunteered to accompany me in search of the lost man—so very careful was each individual present of his own security.

Disgusted at such conduct, and impatient of delay, I sallied forth again from the house with my sword in my hand, and once more entered the temple. I saw no one there, and then I proceeded to search a small grove at the back of the building. The grass was trodden down apparently by several footsteps ; thence I tracked feet to the open plain, where I entirely lost the marks. I continued my search until evening unsuccessfully, and I then returned to the distressed wife of Shewdhut, disconsolate and unhappy. I found the poor woman stretched on her bed, almost exhausted by weeping and sorrow. I feared to disturb her ; as, by having nothing comforting to communicate, I should but add to her sorrow. I sat down on the threshold of the door, meditating on Shewdhut's disappear-

ance, and thinking that my hopes of beholding my father were now almost annihilated. Still I determined to proceed to Satarah, and spare no labour, when there, to find out Sevaje's present concealment. Having the kurdoorah in my possession, I could not fail of being acknowledged by him as his son, if I really were so, although the presence of Shewdhut would have facilitated the means, and hastened the time of investigation. Fastening my turban under my chin, and putting on my shoes, I was leaving the street in which the house of Shewdhut was situated, when, to my astonishment, I was surrounded by a crowd of Wanee's friends, who made me their prisoner, calling me Shewdhut's murderer. It was in vain that I endeavoured to convince them of their mistake : they hurried me to the police-office, where, the whole affair having been investigated, I was fortunately released. I call myself fortunate, because, on being charged with such a crime by a mob, I did not get more ill-usage, and was suffered to depart. I did not go in peace notwithstanding, although the kotwall released me ; for the people still maintained their first opinion of my being, directly or indirectly, concerned in Shewdhut's murder ; and I was hooted, hissed, and pelted out of the city, as if I had been the greatest criminal that had ever been within its walls.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BEING once clear of the people and in the open fields, to which I had run until my breath began to fail me, I was surrounded by night, which had began to close in before I was clear of the city. I still, however, continued my journey towards Satarah, until I was overcome with weariness and fatigue. I threw myself down under a tree, and sank, almost worn out, into a sound slumber. I was awoke by the loud snorting of an elephant, which, with his driver upon his neck, was proceeding along the road. As I was rousing myself, the mahouhut called out, "Hollo, brother! what—asleep in the jungles at this time of the year!" I replied, travellers wearied by long marching had no choice left, and the shelter of a tree must, in such cases, be put up with. "Whither art thou going?" asked the driver. I told him to Satarah. "Well, that is fortunate," rejoined the mahouhut, "for I am bound there also, and will give you a ride upon the elephant." I thanked him, and tapping his animal upon the head, he cried, "kneel down." The huge creature obeyed, and I clambered up his side, and when seated, the animal arose with us at command. It was the

first time I had ever rode upon one of these sagacious beasts. The elephant was sometimes troublesome, in which case the mahouhut thrust his goad into the hole of a wound behind the animal's ear, which he said he never suffered to heal, and it instantly had the good sense to become submissive. The mahouhut observed, that he had another sore place which he probed when he wanted the animal to quicken his pace, and another when he wanted to make him scream, or utter a salaam in praise of his lord and master. I inquired his master's name, and he informed me it was Holkar's dewan, or prime minister, adding, "and a good master he is, for we all act as we like, and fill our bellies by doing the people to the extent of our fancies." Thus the mahouhut scarcely ever ceased chattering about one thing and another every minute of the journey, except when he called out to his elephant, *Chul, chul*, or "walk on quick," accompanying the word of command with a kick behind the creature's ear. The beast went along snorting and puffing at a brisk rate, and the driver would begin to talk to me again. I inquired what news there was at Indore. "Oh, nothing particular," replied the fellow; "an old wanee,* they say, has been murdered (*chul, chul, Baba!*), and it is supposed a stranger, who lodged in his house, is the guilty person; but our kotwell could see no ground for the charge, and released the stranger, who was no doubt very glad to get off. For my part, if he really did kill the old grain-seller,

* Or shopkeeper.

I think he did a good act ; there are too many of these miserly old rascals in Indore, and the grain is so dear a poor man must almost starve." I remarked, I did not think that was his case, for he appeared in excellent condition. " Me? no, no, old *Futteh gudje** here gives me half his flour and ghee daily, and he must be fed, let grain be at what price it may. You know it would little redound to my credit to mount my lord on a lean brute." I observed that what he said was true, nor would it redound to his lord's credit to be driven by a lean mahouhut. " Exactly thus," replied the driver, " and thus Futteh and myself are, you observe, in condition, not among the spare creation."

This mahouhut was a merry good-natured fellow, and at any other time I should have entered into and enjoyed his jokes ; but now, recent events, and my anxiety for the future—the idea of finding a father, or of being crossed by some mischance in my endeavours to penetrate to his retreat, pressed upon my mind. I could not long continue to feign an enjoyment of the fellow's wit, and to put on a jocularity that must sit but very awkwardly upon me. The driver soon perceived I was not his match in spirits, and that I often relapsed into silence and thoughtfulness. He would then console himself with a song, stopping frequently in the midst of his ditty to cry out to his elephant, " Chul, chul, Baba !" The last halt we made, before reaching our destination, was at a small village, where the driver purposed

* Epithet applied to the elephant, meaning "victorious."

to dine, together with his beast. He being a Mohammedan, I could not dine with him ; but he said he would give me some raw rice, if I would accompany him to the grain-shops in the small bazaar. Having fastened the elephant's hind leg by a chain to a tree, and put a rope round his fore legs, we entered into the bazaar. To observe the airs the fellow put on, he might have been taken for the dewan himself, instead of his mahouhut. He twisted his mustachios, and cocked his turban on one side, folding his arms akimbo before a grain-shop, where, in the midst of a few half-filled baskets of grain, sat cross-legged a starved meagre Marwarry, the owner of the shop. "Ho ! you skin and bone Marwarry," cried the driver, "up with you, and supply my lord the dewan's elephant with rice, ghee, flour, and *jagree*.* Be quick, I say, or, by Allah, I will show you how my elephant serves those who will not feed him."—"Arry *deo, hoi, hoi*," † cried the grain merchant ; "I have no rice, no ghee, no flour, no *jagree*. Your beast would eat up all in the village."—"Silence, you rascal," cried the mahouhut, "or I will report you on my return."—"Indeed," said the poor devil, "you must go to the potail ; I have no supply of what you demand. Good driver, don't distress me ; go," added he, in a low whisper, "to the shop of Laldass in the next street, his granaries are full of everything you want."—"Well, well," answered the mahouhut, "if he has not any I shall return to you." We then went on to Laldass ; but he having probably heard of the great devourer

* Coarse sugar.

† An exclamation.

that was come into the village, and knowing that if he parted with his grain he would never be paid for it, had carefully shut up his shop. In a violent rage, the mahouhut returned to the Marwarry ; but he, taking advantage of our absence, had done the same thing before we could return to him, and most carefully secured the avenues that led to his rice and flour, in the midst of which he had no doubt taken up his quarters. The mahouhut then went to the potail, saying, "Here I am, do you choose to feed us?"—"What can I do?" replied the poor fellow. "I cannot make grain."—"Very well, my friend," said the driver, "you know the consequences!" The potail shrugged up his shoulders, and said he was helpless, for the grain-dealers had shut up their shops. "Then, by Allah," said the mahouhut, "they shall soon be opened." Having said this, he went to the place where he had left his beast tied up, and roaring for his food. Loosening his chain and ropes he scrambled upon his neck and rode him up to the shop of Laldass, which was merely the verandah of a house, closed up with a number of narrow planks that served for shutters. The elephant stood close with its enormous head touching the shutters, and his rider called out, "Ho! within there, I want rice."—"Chawul nu,hue,"* cried a voice from within. "Bring flour then," said the mahouhut. "Attah nu,hue,"† was the reply. "Ghee then."—"Toop nu,hue,"‡ answered the shopkeeper with a hearty laugh, as if it was a good joke. "Give me jagree then,"

*. No rice.

† No flour.

‡ No ghee.

said the driver. “*Gor nu,hue,*”* responded the shopkeeper. “I will see if you tell truth then,” answered the mahouhut; and placing his heels behind the ears of his elephant, and goading him in one of the sore places he had before mentioned, he exclaimed, “*Tor dallo, Baba, zoor se.*”† The cunning animal, as if it knew the flour was behind the shutters, butted at them with full force, and crash they went to pieces in an instant, and discovered Laldass in the midst of plenty, tumbling affrighted over his baskets of grain. “Oh, mercy! mercy!” he cried; “here is flour, ghee, rice, and sugar, good mahouhut, take what you want.”—“Rascal,” cried the driver, “I have a great mind to make the elephant squeeze the breath out of your miserable body, for giving me so much trouble. Come, fill my sacks, or I will not spare you.” The women of Laldass now came forward, and filled the bags with everything he wanted, for which they did not get a single rupee in return. The bags being placed on the elephant’s back, the animal walked majestically away, the mahouhut saying to the poor devil of a grain-dealer, “Perhaps I shall not report you on my return to Indore, provided you have a second supply ready for me as I come back. Don’t give me this trouble again.” The family bowed in silence. We now sought the potail, who had provided wood for us, and some sugar-canies for the elephant to eat while the bread was baking; and we once more secured the animal, and left him to munch them,

* No sugar. † “Break it to pieces, old fellow, with all your might.”

while we attended to our own cookery. "Did you ever see such rascals?" said the elephant-driver. "They would no more mind seeing me and my elephant starve, than you would mind seeing them hanged."—"Not they," I replied; "but it is well we are not out of Holkar's dominions; for, were we in those of the English, we should, I fear, be made to repent our feat."—"Perhaps we should," answered the fellow; "but as the case stands, we have nothing to do with the Toope Wallas, and I heartily wish they were driven out of India."—"We must fight harder than we have yet done to accomplish this," I rejoined; "but were it not for the bad management of your master and the other rajahs, and rulers, these foreigners would never have done what they have. Holkar, Bajerao, and Scindea; are always ready for war, and when it begins they run away from it. This is the way the Toope Wallas have got so firm a hold among us, and we shall, I fear, never live to see the end of it."—"What you say may be very true," answered my companion, "but hang me if I know anything about the matter; but I do know that, as long as I drive an elephant, he shall not starve, come what may." We pursued this discourse no further; and as soon as the elephant had devoured his bread, rice, and sugar, we continued our journey. Nothing more occurred until we perceived the hill on which the seven-towered fort of Satarah* stands. I then deemed it

* Called Satarah, or Sath-Istara, or the Seven Stars, or Pleiades, from its seven towers.

prudent to alight, and thanking the mahouhut for his kindness, I walked, well muffled up, into the city.

In the streets I saw groupes of ill-looking fellows conversing, and their appearance convinced me there was something of importance about to take place. In one part two men passed me at a quick pace; one of whom I felt certain was Gabbage Gousla. They were out of sight in a moment; but, from their hurried manner, I had a conviction that mischief could not be far off;—perhaps some plot was on the eve of explosion, as my intelligence respecting the state of affairs gave me good reason to surmise would be the case. Having no money and little food, I determined to fast until the next day, and I rambled about until I reached a durhm sallah, which was, very fortunately, unoccupied. Here I took my silver kurdoorah, and secured it about my person. It was too small to go round my waist, but I wound it twice round my arm, getting the snakes' heads to meet with some difficulty, and fixing them by the small screw attached to the ornament. I had scarcely done this before I heard voices approaching; and presently some men entered, carrying spears and matchlocks. Seeing me sitting unemployed, they cried, "Ho, brother!—do you want a job? if so, come with us, and load yourself with some of these weapons." I inquired whither they were going;—they told me where pay was to be had. I asked who were their employers; and they said they were persons who would either be kings or

beggars'; but upon my questioning them further, they told me that was neither here or there, but bid me jump up and assist them, for it was no time to be idle. I desired them first to tell me whom I was to serve; and one of them cursed me, and said, "Shoot him! he is one of Gunput's spies!"—"Hold!" I cried; "I am not inclined that side the question, anyhow." The men then bade me come along. I piled several matchlocks on my shoulders, and followed them through ravines and over hills, until we came to a very considerable cavern. Here one of them gave a loud whistle, which was answered by one more shrill, and of longer continuance, from within. Not a word was spoken by my guides, until a light gleamed from a recess of the cave. One of the men then said, taking my wrist, "Come on, but utter not a word." The bearer of the light now approached us; and, seeing me, asked me who I was. One of my companions answered that the load was too heavy for them, and they had therefore hired me. Some whispering then took place between the men who arrived with me and the person who bore the torch, which ended in the latter addressing me nearly to this effect:—"Stranger, you are at liberty to return from whence you came, or to enter the cavern. If you choose to go away, here is your hire; if you prefer to remain with us, you must not depart until certain circumstances dissolve our band, in which, provided you will enlist, we shall be happy to accept your services; but you must not flinch from the cause you have embraced, you

must bind yourself by a solemn oath to be faithful to our cause, and to promote our objects even to death." I begged him to admit me, and to state to me the nature of the service in which they proposed I should embark. I said I was fearful lest I should enter a den inhabited by Gunput Rao and his party, in whose cause I would not engage ; but if I did so, and found after all that I was admitted of a party I could not support,—how could I retract? To suppose no worse, after what I had said, the cavern must be my prison until the present disputes were settled. I said I had no objection, should an opportunity be afforded me of so doing, to take a conspicuous part in fighting for the unfortunate Sevaje, whom I had every reason to suppose I was bound in honour to serve ; but to fall into the hands of his opponent would, indeed, be a dreadful thing for me. The torch-bearer, seeming to feel my embarrassment, desired me not to act in too great a haste. "No deceit is ever practised here," said he ; "the troops of Sevaje fight in open and honourable warfare, for no guile is suffered in his name ; and it is the same in all other matters in which his followers engage." The name of Sevaje and these statements (which I was conscious no agent of Gabbage would use or make) determined me how to act. I made a motion to the torch-bearer to lead me on, and delivered to him my sword, as a sign I submitted to an engagement on his side of the question. He then led me, with the other men, over several rugged places, until we came to a wide stream that flowed subter-

raneously through the cave; across this a door presented itself, studded with iron spikes of enormous dimensions. On a signal being given from without, the door was gradually lowered, until it formed a bridge across the stream. We passed over, and entered a spacious place—so much so, indeed, it seemed as if the whole hill had been excavated to form the apartment. In this excavation there sat twelve men, partly in armour, and before them were provisions of all kinds. A hum of numerous voices was heard, proceeding from different passages on the right and left hand of the hollow or great chamber, which I immediately conjectured to be Sevaje's stronghold. Who knew but he might himself be there, or one of the twelve men before me? I was so intent in regarding their features, and so occupied with my thoughts, that I did not hear one of them address me, until I was pulled by the sleeve by the torch-bearer, who stood at my side. Having satisfied my own mind Sevaje was not among them, I craved pardon for my abstraction; and one of them repeated his question, demanding my name. I determined to use no deceit, lest, on being discovered, I should not be trusted in their affairs; I therefore replied, "My name is Pandurang Härì." Several voices spoke at once—"Is it possible!" cried they. "Am I known, then," I responded, "by any of this gallant band?"—"Your name," said the first speaker, "is familiar to us;—you have enemies, but your lucky star has led you here. We have certain information of persons lying in wait for

you at Poona, where, it is reported, you have concealed a girl named Sagoonah. Not being acquainted with your person, we deemed it fruitless the attempting to find you out, and warn you of your danger and of the secret attacks of your enemies. But how did you come from Poona hither, and escape the assassins that lurkéd about for you?" I informed them in return that I came not from Poona, but from Indore. They inquired if I came alone. I said an unhappy man, who I feared was no more, was to have accompanied me. They asked his name, and I told them Shewdhut Wanee. "By Ishwar! the very man," cried the chief of the party. "But say, how know you he is no more? How were you acquainted with him?" I told him my life had been one unfortunate scene of disappointments and hardships; that I had been hunted through the world by an unrelenting enemy, who had sworn to take my life. I had fled to Guzerat from the Deccan, but I was allowed no rest; my enemies followed me closely, and dogged me back to my own country. I had been tricked by knaves, robbed by Bheels, and pursued by assassins; that it so happened, as I was flying from the latter, I fell in with an old man, a goatherd, in a glen near Asseerghur, whose life I by chance discovered was in jeopardy. I made this circumstance known to him; we conversed together, and were mutually pleased. I thought his resignation, and manners, and hidden misfortunes, most touching; I swore to serve him, should it be ever in my power to do so. He told me he should

quit the glen, and proceed to Indore, where lived a Wanee, named Shewdhut, who, on my producing to him a silver ring which he left with me, would conduct me to the place of his retreat. Circumstances afterwards made it necessary for me to visit the goatherd, from whom I conceived it possible I might learn something regarding an unfortunate and persecuted girl already named ; that I went to Indore for this purpose, had an interview with Shewdhut, whom I convinced I was no impostor, and he, at length, told me that the goatherd was not at Indore, but at Satarah, whither he was himself proceeding. I then mentioned the disappearance of Shewdhut Wanee, and the reasons I had for believing him to be murdered.

The chief of the party heard me conclude my story, with melancholy in his countenance at the fate of Shewdhut. The whole twelve now whispered to each other in so low a tone, I could not catch a single syllable of what they said. The chief at length begged me to retire for a short time, but to await their call. The torch-bearer arose, and, opening a little side-door, desired me to follow him. I then entered a small square chamber, covered with mats, on which he bade me be seated, and left me to reflect on my singular adventure. In about an hour I was summoned again into the presence of the council, the chief of which desired me to be seated in front of him. I obeyed, and he then commenced by stating that they had resolved to ask me a few questions more, which I might or might not

answer, as I saw fit ; but that, in answering them, there was every probability of benefiting myself. Moreover, having heard my answers, they could better determine how far to intrust me with the secrets connected with their cause, and the object they had in view. I bowed assent, and they proceeded :—“Have you any reason to believe that the goat-herd you mentioned is any other than a private individual ?” I answered, “I have every reason to believe him to be Sevaje, the lawful successor to the musnud of Satarah.” They then bade me state my reasons ; and, fearing to hint at the chance of my being his son, lest it should not be so after all, and I should be esteemed presumptuous, I answered “that Shewdhut had dropped some pretty strong hints to me, and some expressions had escaped him, from which I gathered that such was the case—indeed, I felt certain of it.” They then inquired who Sagoonah was. I replied, “A girl betrothed to a young man who has never been heard of.”—“How came she under your protection?” I answered, “She is not under my protection ; she lives with her aunt. I am acquainted with them, and wished to marry the girl ; but the uncertainty as to the fate of her betrothed husband prevents our union.” They then inquired where I first knew her, and I told them how I had rescued her from the hands of murderers, and had aided in concealing her from them to this day. They next questioned me if I knew any of the murderers, and I told them that one was named Gabbage Gousla, who was also an enemy of mine. “Indeed,” cried

the chieftain. "Know you aught of this Gabbage?" I replied, "Yes, that he was Gunput Rao, the pretender to the musnud of Satarah."—"Has he a lawful right?" inquired one of the twelve. "None," I answered; "he is a villain and a murderer!"—"How can you speak so positively?" questioned the chief. I replied, "Because I heard his history from the mouth of his own son, Mahadeo."—"This is very strange!" exclaimed several of the council at once. "It is so," I remarked; "for, at the time I heard the son say this, he had no idea he ever should meet his father again, or be in any condition to aspire to the throne—he was then a roving Pindaree."

After this I was desired to withdraw again to my seat in the small chamber. I remained there another hour, when I was again summoned. "Young man," said the chief, "knowing so much of the history of Sevaje and Gunput Rao as you do, whose cause will you espouse?" I replied that of Sevaje, and that I would serve him honestly and faithfully with all my heart; that he should have no more devoted adherent, no stauncher supporter. "You see, then," he added, "men before you now who will die for Sevaje; if you are sincere, will you enrol your name among ours, and take the oath we shall prescribe?" I answered that I would. Upon this a naked sword was presented to me, and I was desired to repeat the following words:—"I swear by the holy cow, by fire and by water, to aid and assist Sevaje Owdhut in his attempt to reign in Satarah! I

devote my heart and body to his cause, and I will oppose and contend, even to death, with his enemies, on water or land ; that neither cold nor heat shall deter me from pursuing them, nor mountains nor rivers be obstacles to turn me aside from this my purpose ; that neither rewards nor threats shall bias me to the cause of the traitor Gunput Rao, or his son Mahadeo ; but that the last drop of blood in my veins shall be to Sevaje ! And I bind myself also to obey his officers, and aid and assist them in battle and council, should my services be so needed ; and if I fail, or act contrary to this advice, may Ishwar judge me ! ” I then touched the sword, and was allowed to retire.

No great while after this, the chief, or he who seemed to lead the council, came to me, seated himself by my side, and entered at once into conversation. Among other things, he told me he thought I must be curious to know how my name became so well known to them, but that the fact was their spies had overheard a man named Kokoo, a chief of Gunput Rao’s force, propose my assassination. From the conversation of this man and of others, it was evident I was considered a person of some consequence, whom it was very desirable to remove out of the way ; hence the surprise of the council at hearing my name. I observed that Kokoo had an enmity to me from a private cause, and wholly independent of his zeal for the cause of his employer. I then narrated my adventure at the cavern. The conversation finished by my receiving the offer of the command of

fifty men, who were trained to the duty of both horse and foot soldiers, that they might act as circumstances should require. I accepted the command with gratitude, and requested his name, that I might acknowledge his commands as my superior. His name, he said, was Naroba Taitia, a jagheerdar, who had been deprived of his estates unjustly by the present rajah of Satarah. Seeing no chance of obtaining justice by supporting Gunput Rao, he had linked himself with the other side, and would stand or fall with it, as he could rely on Sevaje's justice.

I now ventured to inquire a little how our public affairs stood, and what were our resources. I found the troops were more numerous than the money at hand would maintain, and that the death of Shewdhut was a loss in this respect, as he had always supplied Sevaje with cash. How Gunput Rao could discover this was a mystery; but there seemed little doubt he had been murdered by Gunput's agency. The chief of the council left me soon after this, hoping I should attend them on the morrow. In the meantime, I had an opportunity of observing everything that was going on in the cavern, and that there were nearly three hundred men scattered about, all cheerful, confident, and to appearance very well appointed. I found that an equal number were assembled at another stronghold a few miles off, and that as Gunput Rao was known to have no more than four hundred followers, we hoped to profit by our superiority in numbers, as well as in valour. I inquired

where Sevaje then was, and found he was in Satarah, though Gunput Rao believed him in one of his strongholds. I found orders came from him daily, and that a despatch was then hourly expected from him. He had very fortunately a sincere friend at the court, who held the office of dewan, and daily informed him of every proceeding known there. By this means Sevaje was aware of Gunput's intentions, as the reigning rajah was no stranger to any of them, and befriended Gunput.

The next morning, on the assembling of the council, a shrill whistle was heard from without. All were eager to learn what orders the messenger had brought. The drawbridge being lowered, an hircarrah appeared, and taking off his turban, produced a sealed roll. The chief of the council took it, and reading the contents, first dismissing the messenger from the chamber, he told us that if ever we struck a decisive blow, now was our moment. It appeared that Gunput Rao had for some time been petitioning the rajah to restore him his estate, which had been long ago sequestered upon his disappearance. Not content with doing this, he had also successfully claimed his brother's, on pretence of his having been murdered. Moreover, on giving, or promising to give, to the minister of the rajah an enormous sum of money, he had obtained an order on the treasury for the arrears of both estates, as annually collected from the time of their sequestration. This money was to be issued to him the next day, at the hour of five in the

evening, and he would no doubt convey it immediately to his stronghold, and thereby raise an overwhelming force, which it would be madness in Sevaje to resist. The latter therefore wished, as the despatch stated, that the band assembled in the cavern should march against a fortified village, which was named, on one of Gunput's estates, and destroy it while the troops at Sevaje's other hold should lie in ambuscade for the treasure of Gunput on the road from Satarah. If these two attacks succeeded, the followers of the party attacked would be paralysed, and a favourable reaction be thereby produced in favour of Sevaje. The chieftain concluded by requesting us all to arm. This was received with cheering, and the cavern rung with the animated shouts. The despatches further stated that Canooje, who commanded at Sevaje's other fort, would be with us on the morrow to arrange the plan of attack. Orders were then given to afford him the most rapid access, and the council broke up. All now prepared for the events of the next day; the arms were put in order, the ammunition examined, and every heart seemed elate with the prospect of being actively employed, some perhaps with the hope of plunder as well as of glory.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BEFORE the day broke I was awoke by a sentinel, who called me to attend the council, for Canooje had arrived. I hurried to the great chamber, and was introduced to this chief, with whose courageous and lofty presence I was much struck. His deportment was noble, his air military, and his countenance elevated and pleasing. I found that the determination to place Sevaje upon the Satarah musnud had originally proceeded from him, and that it was by his interest and efforts all the principal jagheerdars of whom the council consisted had joined to aid in the cause. It was now settled that at four o'clock in the afternoon we should storm the fortified village belonging to Gunput Rao, whilst Canooje's division was placed in ambuscade among the ravines, within five miles of Satarah, through which the treasure of Gunput Rao must pass; and, having made themselves masters of it, bring it to the stronghold as the nearest place of safety. Our division was ordered to despatch intelligence to Canooje, while he remained in ambush, of the result of our attack on the village; at the same time, if we failed, we were to remain and blockade

the place, to prevent the garrison having a communication with the detachment that escorted the treasure. Thus the corps that formed the escort could not be increased in strength, and the chance of the discomfiture of our design was more remote.

The plan of attack being thus finally arranged, Canooje left us to return to his troops. When I found that the whole of our strength in the cavern was ordered to march on the village, I suggested the prudence of leaving a party behind to protect it. I observed that the enemy would hardly omit to attack it in our absence, for we should not have marched far before Gunput Rao's spies would convey to him intelligence that the cavern had been vacated, and that on our return we should run the chance of seeing it occupied by the enemy, which would be an effectual damper to our successes elsewhere. This suggestion was properly weighed, and ordered to be carried into effect by a majority of voices. Fifty men were left with a jummahdar for this purpose. If we arrived before the village at the hour of four, we should probably prevent the garrison from sending out a reinforcement to support the treasure-party. In case the party had marched, we could then attack it in the open plain on our advance towards the village, or leave a party for this purpose concealed in its line of march. We determined therefore to move forwards directly. All became bustle and preparation. I collected my men, saw that they were properly armed and accoutred, that their swords, shields, daggers, and

matchlocks were in order, and that they were well supplied with ammunition, scaling-ladders, and ropes, for we had no cannon to breach the village walls. When we mustered and marched away, I was much pleased to see the regularity and sobriety of our brave comrades, many of whom had been soldiers under the fallen Peeshwa Badjerao, and were happy to be employed on the present occasion, when their pay was punctual, and they were well supplied with the needful munitions. Those on the side of Gunput Rao were men of the same order, but not headed by officers as experienced or respectable as ours, but by desperadoes like Kokoo, who looked to future reward and aggrandisement from him whom they supported, but were themselves among the unprincipled and dishonourable. Upon our arrival at a deep hollow, we halted and concealed ourselves in it, sending out scouts to watch the motions of the inhabitants and garrison of the village against which our operations were directed, and which was only distant from us about two miles. Our spies soon returned, and informed us that one hundred men had left the village, and taken the road to Satarah, which passed by the place where we lay concealed. We observed them approaching, and, with a jummahdar and about a hundred men, I rushed from our ambush upon the unprepared soldiers of Gunput. Though taken completely by surprise, they recovered and ranged themselves in fighting array, keeping up so constant a fire from their matchlocks, that we could not attack them sword in hand as we intended. Their

commander, however, having made them fire a volley, thinking to terrify and disperse us, our jummahdar ordered us to charge the instant their pieces were fired, and before they could reload, or even draw their swords, we were on them. Nearly every one of them was cut down, and our victory was complete. We learned from the prisoners that the village contained about one hundred and fifty men, who were entirely unprepared for a hostile attack. Naroba, in consequence of our success, was in high spirits, and gave orders to march directly upon the village, which we did at once, compelling the prisoners to guide us with their arms tied behind them. On our arrival before the gates, we summoned the garrison to surrender. A shower of arrows was the only answer we received, upon which, placing our ladders against the mud wall of the fort, we mounted to the attack. I led the storming-party sword in hand. We found a number of Bheels had been mustered for the defence of the place, whom Gunput Rao had but lately taken into his service. These fellows galled us dreadfully with their arrows; but as our plan was to close with them, we gave them few opportunities, after our once effecting a lodgment on the walls, of using their fatal weapons. The fort of the village was very small, and the garrison, taken by surprise, was cramped for room and in confusion. Part of them made a sortie, some for the purpose of fighting, and others of running away. Naroba at the head of his corps met them, and having borne down all opposition outside the

walls, was coming up as I pursued the enemy out at the gate. The Bheels stood outside inactive, fearing to discharge their arrows, and wound their own men, intermingled with ours. I now attacked the Bheels, who with the party that had been so anxious to make a sally from the fort attempted to return and enter it again ; but I placed my men before the gates, ordering them to resist to the last any body of the enemy that should attempt to force an entrance. The enemy seeing this, with great alertness ran to the scaling-ladders, which still remained against the wall, and tried to force an entrance by their means. These intentions were quickly seen by Naroba, who sent round fifty men to keep a flanking fire along the wall as they descended inside, while another party performed the same manœuvre on the outside. By this means they were tumbled headlong down in every direction. The Bheels, finding their own party worsted, sought for safety in flight to their native wilds. The other soldiers without the walls, seeing there was no hope of success, fled for their lives. Everything being thus in our possession, and not an enemy left before us in less than an hour after we began the attack, we proceeded to plunder. But we could discover only a few pots and pans. There was, it is true, a good supply of grain, of which we carried off all we could find the means of conveying away.

Whilst some of the men were hunting for plunder, they reported that they had found a prisoner in a subterraneous cell, and bound to the wall by a strong chain. Thinking

the unfortunate being was some enemy of Gunput Rao, I obtained permission from Naroba to release him before we quitted the place to march back. I thought it possible he might perhaps give us some information of importance, and I went myself to his place of confinement, which was dark and damp. Not a sound save the clank of the unfortunate prisoner's chains could even be heard in it. A soldier was sent for a torch to show us the way, and soon returning we reached the spot. On placing the torch so as to see his countenance, what was my surprise at observing my old and tried friend Nanna. "Nanna! my dear friend, is it you, indeed, that I behold in this horrible dungeon. Speak! you cannot have forgotten me." In a voice feeble and faint, he replied, "What, Pandurang! is it you—a friend, and here?" "It is in truth," I answered; "thanks to the gods who conducted me hither." I bade them break his chains, which was soon done, and Nanna and I were speedily in each other's arms. "Am I in a dream?" said Nanna. "How came you here—can it be real?" I told him this was not a time or place for explanation, that I must lead him to my comrades, who would rejoice with me in the preservation of a friend. Nanna was weak, and it was with difficulty we got him to walk up into the air, the sudden effect of which made him faint. A little of our attention speedily recovered him, and I related to Naroba the friendship that had existed between us. He congratulated me on the event, giving his hearty assent to Nanna's

accompanying us to the cavern. I confess I longed to hear the particulars of his captivity. Curiosity was a leading characteristic in my disposition, and I thought he must also feel not a little curious to know how I came into my present situation.

The total destruction of the fort would have required more time than we could spare, or safely afford to remain while our other detachments were in the field, and their operations a matter of uncertainty to us. We contented ourselves with demolishing the gates, and as much of the walls as time allowed, and then returned to the cavern, having lost ten men, and others of our number being badly wounded. I myself received a sabre cut, which, though not dangerous, gave me great pain. It was late before we reached the cavern, and upon making the well-known signal, we were admitted once more. We found, as I had apprehended, that during our absence a party of the enemy had attempted to carry the place, but had been repulsed by the guard, which but for me would not have been left to protect it. The detachment which had gone in search of the treasure had returned, not so successful as we hoped it would have been. Canooje stated that he had lost twenty men, and that, although he had seized the money, to his great disappointment there was not half the sum he expected. He had learned from the prisoners, however, that the bulk had been conveyed away in a different direction; and that, his men not being in a condition to pursue it, they had

returned with about seven thousand rupees in their possession. The money was well escorted, and it appeared that if we had not cut up the intended reinforcements, Canooje would not have attained his purpose as easily as he did, perhaps not at all. The news of our victory was no small thing, however, in our favour, and tended much to lessen the consequence of Gunput Rao, and to damp the spirit of his followers. Our wounded having been attended to, and every care in our power shown them, we stretched our fatigued limbs on our mats, and sought a refuge in sleep from our past labours. In the morning a council was held, to consider what steps had best be taken in pursuance of our objects. Canooje first proposed sending out spies to obtain intelligence of the movements of the enemy; but this was overruled until the receipt of another secret despatch from Sevaje. It seemed necessary, as we had lost so many men, to send out considerate agents to obtain recruits for our detachments. This was immediately done; and Canooje, after giving a full account of our recent proceedings, and the capture of the treasure, in a despatch to Sevaje, marched away from us with his well-appointed troop.

There being nothing of moment to occupy me, I hastened to Nanna, who was already showing he made progress in his recovery from the effects of his barbarous imprisonment and accompanying starvation. I related to him the particulars of my history since we quitted each other, and with

which the reader must be already so well acquainted as to be able to recall them to recollection. Nanna in his turn informed me that, on arriving at Satarah, he lodged the woman who accompanied him in an obscure house, which was the same night surrounded by the agents of Gunput Rao, who forcibly carried her off; but the next morning she returned, saying the people who took her away had released her. Nanna stated that, being intent upon finding out whether the boy to whom Sagoonah had been betrothed was living or dead, he lost no opportunity of inquiring into the matter; but finding it in vain, he left Satarah for the purpose of joining me at Poona. In his way thither he was surrounded by ruffians, who bound him fast, and conducted him to the fort from whence we had rescued him. There Kokoo examined him, and desired him to tell where Sagoonah was concealed; he also made strict inquiries respecting myself. Nanna would answer none of his questions, but remained silent; upon which he was sentenced to imprisonment in the dungeon, and *natchne rotee*:* this was to endure until he should betray his friend. Having said he was determined not to do so, he was in addition chained to the wall where he was found. I hereupon pressed this trusty friend to my heart, and related to him all I had formerly omitted in giving him a sketch of my history. I also let him know the probable situation I stood in with Sevaje, the lawful successor of the Satarah musnud. Nanna

* Bread made of the coarsest grain.

was struck with wonder on hearing this part of my history. After standing with his mouth wide open, he said, "I always thought you were a great scholar, but never dreamed of your being a prince at the same time—let me fall prostrate!"—"Not so fast, my dear friend," I cried; "it is not quite so certain I am a prince; and if I should be, it is more than probable I shall never be in a situation to receive the homages of my friends in the way you would deliver yours."—"You shall be, though," said Nanna; "and may I live to behold you on a throne, and to say another star is added to the Pleiades, and that Satarah shall henceforth be Atarah!*" I could not help telling Nanna he had already made great progress in the language of a courtier; that he perhaps acquired it from his enemies while a prisoner, and they had been practising flattery, and the arts of rising at court, upon the strength of their expectations. "I shall need," said I, "a deal of polishing, my good friend, before I can be compared to the dullest star in the heavens, as you would agree with me in thinking, were you acquainted with the whole of my history, which perhaps I shall one day unfold to you. Prejudiced as you are in my favour, you would shake your head upon me were I seated on a musnud, if you knew everything." Nanna was going to reply by a second essay in courtiership; but it was so disagreeable a thing to my ear to be addressed in this gross way, that I thought, if ever I reached such high

* Atarah, or eight stars.

honour, it would then be full time enough to suffer the infliction of its hollowness, as some balance for the glory of the situation. Besides, I really felt conscious of my demerits, and all the flattery in the world could not make me change my opinion of myself; for I knew what my own conduct had been in numerous instances. It is true I was brought up and educated by menials and base wretches of every description; I had been cast upon the stream of life to float along by myself, as necessity or fancy directed; I had been persecuted wrongfully, and obliged to resort to mean artifices oftentimes for existence itself. This had been the case in youth, when passion is warmest, and reason possesses but little influence. I knew that the few good actions of my life were overborne by the many bad ones. Still I was comforted that I had bought experience, and been enabled to see the advantages of a steady, correct, and uniform line of conduct. Villany, I was convinced, had but a short day, and upright intention would ultimately triumph in every circumstance of life. Mahrattas are for the most part bad men—cunning, insidious, and self-interested; but they were ever unfortunate enough to be badly governed. The bad examples of their kings and rulers were ever before them; and the corruption and vices of lesser persons in authority contaminated the people, who are always profligate or virtuous according to the way in which they are governed. I observed to Nanna that I had a deep dread at the idea of being called upon to govern;

and the only chance I should have of success would be to follow the example of my father, who I hoped I should see for many years fulfilling his duties, and thus I might become his scholar. My friend Nanna, upon this, observed that I talked like a book, and that what I said must be true. He would only ask me, ignorant as he was, to be allowed to bask in the sunshine of my favour. I could not help laughing, but told him he might rely upon it, I should never forget him. I said he must not be too sanguine; that I intended the same day to consult with Naroba upon this subject, and upon the propriety of my making a visit to Sevaje, as I felt unhappy at being kept so long in suspense. I desired Nanna not to let a word drop upon this business in the cavern, as he respected my friendship, and, anywhere else, not to let a word respecting it escape him. He promised me all I required, stated his determination to be faithful to my cause, and left me.

There were many solid reasons why I did not wish to make public that it was probable I was so nearly related to Sevaje. One reason was, that it seemed to me possible Gunput Rao might be induced to consent to a public inquiry, or an arbitration of the question between my father and himself, and that the right of the lawful successor might be settled this way; for he would perhaps be induced to abide by such a decision as long as he thought Sevaje alone was living, as, after his death, Mahadeo would infallibly succeed to the musnud. On the other hand, were Gunput Rao to dis-

cover I was living, nothing would induce him to abide by any decree excluding him and his son. With these notions on my mind, I went to Naroba, and earnestly requested I might be allowed to visit Sevaje, having matters of importance to communicate to him. Naroba replied that he himself could have no objections, but that he considered it his duty to mention the request to Sevaje, in the first instance, and then he would immediately communicate his answer to me. I was of course obliged to consent to this step being first taken, and I patiently awaited an answer from Sevaje, which could not occupy a long period of time in communicating. Naroba and myself, in the interim, made the best use of our leisure. We had the sword-practice among our soldiers every day, rendering them as expert as possible in the use of their arms. I afterwards found the benefit of these lessons, as will be seen in the sequel. I also exercised myself in every possible way; but, from the exertion, I found the wound in my arm inflame, and become exceedingly painful. At the time an answer arrived from Sevaje I was in very great pain; but the reply being such as was consonant with my wishes, I determined that even the serious appearance it had began to put on should not deter me from my visit to him, whom I had so much reason to believe was my father. I stated my readiness to depart, and Naroba procured me a guide, desiring me to put on an appearance as unsoldierlike as possible. The first guide

was to conduct me to a second person, through whose means I should gain admittance to Sevaje, unsuspected by the enemy. I obeyed every suggestion made, and followed my guide with a palpitating heart to a small wood, at a considerable distance from our stronghold. My guide tapped at the door of a miserable hovel, which was opened by a lean, tall, emaciated old woman, who instantly admitted us upon seeing the person of him who conducted me. There was something in the appearance of the old hag which at first led me to suspect treachery, and my suspicions were not laid asleep on my seeing the guide and old woman, head to head, in a close whisper. I thought this was unnecessary, where all present were friends, and my bosom became filled with vague suspicions everything was not right. The guide now went away without uttering one word to me, and the old hag seated herself opposite to where I sat; but no effort of mine could induce her to enter into conversation. She mumbled unintelligibly to herself, until I began to get impatient, and begged her to lead the way whither I designed to go. She turned her head round and pointed to the sun with her shrivelled finger, and then to the western quarter of the heavens, from which I judged we must not set out for Satarah until after the sun had set. It wanted full three hours' space of it yet, and being fatigued, and my wound very painful to me, I spent my time in no very agreeable way; for not a single word could I get in the way of con-

versation from this mysterious old woman: I threw myself on a mat to try and sleep ; but sleep fled far from me, and I could only indulge in dreams of what the future might have in store for me, and fall back upon my own thoughts for a means of employing a short period that passed away slow as ages.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

At length, the sun having gone down blood-red, and left that tranquil gloom which so quickly covers the earth on the departure of an Indian day, the old woman tapped me on the shoulder with a long stick. I arose and followed her. Age made it necessary for her to proceed slowly, and a complete ignorance of the point to which she was leading me, impelled me to keep pace with her. My impatience could ill brook the tediousness of such a mode of travelling. A man just hoping to behold his parent, from whom he had been separated nearly the whole of his life, might be excused for an anxiety to press onward and realise his anticipated hopes ; I therefore offered to procure a litter for her, or even carry her on my back, so that we might not linger away all night in our march to the city. The woman made no reply to my offers, but merely shook her head; and I was compelled to proceed at a snail's pace coss after coss, so that it was past eleven o'clock ere we entered Satarah. My conductress took me through the principal streets, until we came to a shop where they sold sweetmeats, and there she purchased several bits of burnt sugar. We then visited a baker's, where she bought bread ;

and the fruit bazaar, where she obtained cocoa-nuts, betel-nuts, and pomegranates. In the last place she purchased a basket to hold what she had bought, and placed it upon my head; so that, in my present dress, I had exactly the appearance of a cooly or porter, and was completely disguised. I followed her still in silence as before, and she led me, to my great surprise, towards the hill on which stands the seven-towered fort of Satarah. Observing my astonishment, she for the first time told me to address her as mother, but not utter a single syllable to any one I might see in her presence. The old creature clambered the hill with difficulty; and when we arrived at the gate of the fort she knocked with her stick, and a sentry opening the wicket demanded who was there. She replied, "Only old Bhowanee and her son."—"Ah! mother," said the sentry, "I thought you had forgotten us: how do you sell your sweetmeats? Come in." So saying, we entered; the basket was taken from my head, the contents examined, and some purchases made. We were then allowed to proceed to the house of the officer who had the charge of the arsenal, an octagon building in one of the seven towers. The old woman was admitted immediately, and a whispering dialogue began with the officer, which convinced me they were well acquainted. After some little further delay I was beckoned into an inner room, and the officer resident in the house began to remove a large ammunition-box which stood in the centre of the chamber. I was wondering what

could be the meaning of this, and to what it all tended, eagerly looking out for the end of the mystery, and almost suspecting foul play, when, I imagine, the man touched some secret lock or bolt, for a door in one of the corners of the room flew open, and discovered a flight of stone stairs, which my conductress descended, motioning me to remain where I then was. The resident in the house retired, and I was left in a most uncomfortable solitude, not wholly divested of fear, when I recollect many circumstances in my past life that, less suspicious in appearance, had led me into trouble. It was not without pleasure, therefore, that in a short time I heard the old woman returning, and greeted her haggard face at the top of the staircase. From thence she beckoned me to follow her, and I found myself quickly in a very comfortable square stone room. She then opened another door in the wall, through which she disappeared, and again left me in solitude. I now threw off my coat, and lay down upon a mat, the wound in my arm torturing me severely. I had not been reclining many minutes before the door through which my conductress had passed opened, and she again entered, followed by a venerable old man, who bore a lamp in his hand, the dim radiance of which did not suffice to give me at first a correct view of his features. Before he noticed me he whispered something to the woman, who reascended the staircase, and closed the trap-door, as I judged from the sound.

I was now alone with him who was most probably my father. What my sensations were at that moment 'can I ever forget? Hope, fear, pleasure, pain, seemed to have possession of me at the same instant : filial awe, reverential regard, a respect for royalty, came upon me, and robbed me of all power of utterance ! One minute would decide my fate, and cast the die of my life—raise me to honour, or dash me into the lowest deep of misery ! The old man, turning towards me, now said, "What, young and valiant man, wouldst thou with me ? I have heard of thy bravery in my cause, and I cannot fear treachery from a brave man ! I have, therefore, admitted thee to my seclusion. What wouldst thou, young man, with me ?" As he spoke, the light flashed upon his features, and I recognised the old goatherd of the glen. "I would claim acquaintance, my lord," I observed ; "we have met before."—"Ah ! where, where ?" he hastily inquired, stooping at the same time to examine my features, as I was sitting cross-legged on the mat. "Truly," continued he, "I have seen that face before ; come to the light, let me be certain." So saying, he bade me arise, and I obeyed. "Yes," said he "I have seen that face before."—"I think in the Asseer-ghur glen," I responded. "In the glen !" said he. "What ! art thou the youth to whom I gave a ring ?" I told him I was the same ; and, mindful of my promise, had sought him in Indore in vain, and had now sought further, and found him in Satarah. "And dost thou then take so great

an interest in my fate as to follow me from place to place? This is kindness I have been of late little used to. But your arm bleeds! I fear I am the cause of much bloodshed. Say, where got you that frightful wound?" I observed, it was a mere scratch, the consequence of my own rashness. "Rather of your valour," said he; "for I guess how it is; but it must be bound up, and thus the blood staunched." So saying, he drew my coat, which I had taken off, over my shoulders, and began to bind it round my wounded arm. This sudden and unexpected act made me bare my right arm, on which was fixed the silver kurdoorah. He started, and exclaimed, "What! what do I see? Nay, I am blind—my eyes are old, and fail me! It cannot be!—let me look again. It is the same! Where got you that chain?—speak! torture me not a moment longer!"—"It is my own," I replied, "and I feel I am in the presence of him who first bound it round my loins."—"My son, my son!" cried the old man, as I fell upon my knees and called him father! A moment was passed in deep silence, which ended in a shower of tears, that, streaming down my father's venerable beard, fell warm upon my head. I can make no attempt to describe my feelings at that moment, or to do justice to the scene. It was a feast of unspeakable joy to my heart—a moment worth years of adversity!

As soon as the old man was more composed, he requested to know by what accident I had learned that his recognition of the chain would warrant me in concluding I was his

son I related to him all that Shewdhut Wanee had informed me of. At the name of Wanee he wept aloud, and desired me to state the particulars of his disappearance, as he understood from Naroba I could give him every particular respecting it. I then entered into the melancholy detail once more. It was frequently interrupted in the recital by his tears and bitter invocations against the perpetrators of the deed. He then referred to the kurdoorah, and exclaimed, "Oh ! that was a night of horrors, when I put this chain around thy infant body ; it was a bloody deed, my Jeoba!"—"Is Jeoba, then, my name?" I eagerly inquired. "It is thy name, my son, and happy was the day to me that gave thee birth ; for, notwithstanding the machinations of my most deadly foes, Heaven has brought thee to my arms!"—"May you be successful against your enemies!" I now observed, in order to lead away the conversation from myself. "Your claims to the musnud of Satarah are just, and you have stout hearts devoted to you, my father, among your troops."—"Ah, my son ! would this dispute might be settled amicably ! Would that Gunput Rao, your unnatural uncle, could be induced to acknowledge my claims, and forego further bloodshed!"—"As long as he believes I am not forthcoming," I replied, "he might show a readiness so to do, and waive his claim until after your decease, when Mahadeo, his son, would succeed to the musnud."—"Then must our present relationship remain a secret," said my father. "I have applied to the English

Government to interfere and adjust our quarrel ; or, if they refuse to do so, that they will allow their agent here to appoint an arbitration, and see that all is fairly and honourably conducted. Thus Gunput will not dare to commit any outrage should the decision be given in my favour ; although, by his intrigues, he will endeavour to effect all that bribery and influence can accomplish, to secure in his interest the persons to whom the settlement of the cause is intrusted."

—“Justice, however, must prevail,” said I ; “and when you are acknowledged the real successor, then will I openly, and not until then, address you as my father.”

Sevaje assenting, we turned to other matters ; and he demanded how it was possible I had been preserved, amid the perils I must have undergone, and then miraculously appeared at so critical a time ? I replied that no one but he who sought for my destruction could account for my escape in infancy, and that in due time I would relate to him all my history, and the minute events of my chequered existence, which had so singularly brought me into the arms of a father and a king. I remarked that of the particulars of his quarrels with his relentless brother, Gunput Rao, I had also acquired some knowledge. My father was in amazement, and could scarcely credit this. I observed also that I had it from the best authority—no less than that of Gunput Rao’s own son, and my cousin Mahadeo, at a time when neither of us had a knowledge of our affinity. I now related to my father all I had heard from Mahadeo respecting the

conduct of his brother, and he proceeded to inform me of the earlier part of my history. He told me that after I was betrothed (here I interrupted him, to inquire to whom, and whether to a girl named Sagoonah?) to one who was now no more, or, if alive, fallen into the hands of Gunput Rao.— I again proceeded, “Oh, say not so ! she is safe ! We love each other with a fervour equal to that of Leila and Mejnoun,* though little did we imagine we had been betrothed in our infancy.”—“This is indeed extraordinary,” observed my father. “Where could you have met her ? How could you have fallen in with her ?” I said I would unfold all to him when he had done relating his own history.

“The will of great Dum be accomplished !” said my father, who then proceeded :—“After you had been betrothed to Sagoonah, the rage of Gunput Rao, your uncle, knew no limits, and put on such a deadly appearance, that I conceived it prudent to quit my place of residence, and retire with you (then an infant, and my only offspring) to a small estate which I possessed in the Chandore territory. Having some business to transact previously at Indore, I visited it for the purpose, and left it one rainy evening. With the ready money I had about me, I purchased there for you the silver kurdoorah, which I thought remarkably elegant, and fastened it around your waist myself. Proud of the ornament, you frequently tottered beside me, until I feared you

* The Romeo and Juliet of the East.

would be fatigued before you would let me take you up in my arms again. After sunset, about the space of an hour had elapsed, when we were surrounded by armed men, among whom I discovered your revengeful uncle. ‘Seize the miscreant!’ he cried; ‘bear away that child—obey your orders!’ At that moment you were forcibly taken from me, and your uncle’s dagger entered my body. The ruffians departed immediately when I fell, to satiate themselves (so I reflected, for I had full possession of my senses) with your innocent blood. I shortly became insensible, and knew nothing more until I found myself stretched upon a comfortable bed and watched with great solicitude. I shall pass over the many days that elapsed before I recovered, and merely inform you that the kind man to whom I owe my life was Shewdhut Wanee, of Indore. He told me he had been to Oogein, and on his return found me weltering in my blood. Discovering signs of life, he placed me in the hands of two coolies who were attending him, and despatched his servants in search of the assassins. It need scarcely be repeated that all search after them proved ineffectual. You may now not be surprised at my sorrow on hearing of the fate of Shewdhut, and that for his interference in my concerns he lost his life. He knew my rank and expectations; he was well acquainted with my misfortunes and promised to afford me all the help in his power, on his return from Marwar (for which he shortly set out), provided I had not succeeded before that time in obtaining justice on

my enemies. As the rajah of Satarah was deposed, it did not then seem the most eligible time for asserting my claims ; and, not wishing to criminate my brother, or try to gain redress against him or security for the future, while the issue of my application might be doubtful, I determined to live as a recluse, until affairs at Satarah became more favourable to my views. Should such a time arrive, I thought I might intimidate Gunput, by threatening to expose him and bring him to justice if he threw any obstacles in my way. Alas ! I little knew the implacability of his disposition, the desperate daring of his character !

“ After living some years in retirement, I visited Shewdhut, who told me he was going to Satarah on his mercantile affairs ; and I requested him, at the same time, to try and gain intelligence of Gunput and his plans, and particularly to discover, if possible, whether you were alive and with him, and what were the reports that had been circulated respecting our disappearance. He promised to use his utmost exertions to discover what I required. On his return I once more emerged from the woods, and went to his house. He stated that his brother had placed himself upon a litter, and had been thus conveyed to Satarah, pretending he had been waylaid while in company with me, that our lives had been attempted, that, in defending myself, I had held up my child, which was stabbed to the heart ! In short, that he himself was left for dead, and plundered of everything valuable about him ! It appeared that he acted his part

marvellously well ; every one gave him credit for shedding tears of genuine sorrow ; especially as he exhibited a letter, purporting to be written by his 'dear brother' at Indore, inviting him thither for the express purpose of settling all their disputes, and arranging for ever the causes of the unhappy differences that had subsisted between them, and stating his own claims to the throne to be false. This letter Shewdhut told me bore my signature ; and so well was it imitated, that no one doubted its being a faithful document, and none, therefore, were likely to dispute the tale my brother had imposed upon them. That he might the better deceive the people, he gave out that it was his determination to resign the world ; and with his son Mahadeo, he had left Satarah, and not been heard of there from that time.

"Such was the account which Shewdhut brought me, and which I must confess struck me with amazement. Why Gunput should resign the world, possessing the ambitious views he did, was a problem beyond my power to solve, even by conjecture. In all likelihood, finding he could not succeed whether I was living or dead (there being no hope of the rajah again sitting on the throne at that time), he made up his mind to quit Satarah, lest some unforeseen event should develop his ferocious attempt on my life and on that of my son. Shewdhut could tell me no more of you than what I have stated already ; namely, that having used you as a shield to cover my own body, you had been

stabbed, and thus perished. Nothing new occurred to me for some time. I selected the glen of Asseerghur for my place of retreat, known only to Shewdhut. One day a gossein begged admittance to my cottage, and ever ready to shelter a weary traveller, I admitted him. He told me his name was Gabbage Gousla. His manners were singular, and, to me, unaccountably strange. He did not remain long, and I thought little about it, except that he disguised his features as much as possible, and spoke a very few words, and those apparently in a feigned voice. It was not until conversing with you on the same spot, and your informing me Gunput Rao walked the earth in the disguise of a gossein, and with the name of Gabbage, that I knew it. The truth then flashed upon my mind ; I felt certain that he must have recognised me, and this at once accounted for his constrained and odd manners."

After mentioning that nearly about the same time two females had taken shelter in his cottage, who, I informed him, were Sagoonah and her aunt, my father continued :—“Feeling certain,” said he, “that my cruel brother meditated a fresh attack upon my life, I left my place of refuge, and once more bent my steps to Indore ; there my friend Shewdhut concealed me. The war was then raging, and I felt assured that, if the English were disposed to act with justice, they would not fail to reinstate the deposed rajah of Satarah. It turned out that they did so ; and I therefore requested Shewdhut to gain for me some intelligence upon which I

could rely, respecting the plans and objects of my wicked brother. He confirmed me in the surmises that I felt in consequence of your information in the glen. Shewdhut went further than I had commissioned him to do; for, learning from some disaffected jagheerdars at Satarah, that there was much doubt as to the truth of my being really dead, and they evincing great partiality towards me, and equal abhorrence at the idea of my brother becoming king, he told one of them, named Canooje, that I was then alive at Indore. Canooje, much pleased at this intelligence, left Satarah with Shewdhut, and presented himself before me, urging me to come forward, and assert my right to the musnud; he assured me that there was a powerful party ready to support my cause. Thus encouraged, I consented to make the attempt; and, finding the present rajah was in a sickly state, and that no time must be lost, I promised to enter Satarah in secret; and when a sufficient number of men were raised and organised to support me, I agreed that I would openly declare myself.

"A curious circumstance occurred about this time, which tended strongly to confirm me in my new resolution. It was during Shewdhut's second absence at Satarah, that an old woman came to Shewdhut's house. She perceived that I avoided her, as I necessarily did all strangers. She called out after me, saying, 'Why fly you from your friends, my lord, the king?' 'King?' I ejaculated. 'Ay, king!' she replied; 'for he who claims a throne shall not succeed, and

he who has not claimed, may ; I shall follow you.' After she was gone away I heard she was considered a witch at Indore, and that her name was Dhankin Bhowanee." Here I interrupted Sevaje by saying, "Bhowanee! why that is the name of her who conducted me to these chambers!" "The same," said my father ; "and a most useful channel of communication I have found her, between myself and the band in the cavern. I am at a complete loss to discover what her motives are for serving me so zealously ; but there is no doubt we shall one day discover. Her appearance removes suspicion ; no one suspects her of being a messenger of mine, and her services have been most important." I then remarked upon the strangeness of the circumstance, and inquired how my father himself obtained admittance to the fort. He said, "By chance : a relation of my wife's was the officer in charge of the arsenal ; and Bhowanee, assuming the character of a dealer in fruits and vegetables, introduced herself to him, and informed him of my existence ; also requesting him to aid in secreting me for a short time. He readily gave his consent, and I followed the old woman in the character of a porter to this place. To deceive the sentinels, my friend here sent another man down the hill with the woman, dressed much as I was ; and thus my presence is not suspected, and I am, perhaps, in a place of greater security than elsewhere. By means of Bhowance, I have been enabled to convey my wishes to Canooje, Naroba, and my other brave friends and officers. Your

stay here now must be short ; but we may soon hope to meet again under better auspices. Before you depart, however, you must inform me of everything respecting Sagoonah ; for she has an uncle, a rich banker here, who has engaged himself on the side of Gunput, and is determined to bestow her hand on his son Mahadeo." "My dear father," I answered, "be assured she is in safety, and beyond the reach of both Gunput and her uncle ! She is now in Bombay, and I am anxious to send her intelligence respecting myself, for it is long since I have done so, and her bosom is torn by a thousand conflicting doubts and apprehensions respecting my safety." My father then said he would procure me a trusty messenger, who would safely take what I had to communicate ; but that, not being present nor within call, it would be better I should give him my message, and he would take care it was forwarded, instructing the hircarrah-himself. I consequently gave my father the necessary information to convey. I was about to depart, when I heard that the old woman was gone, but had left word she would await my arrival at her lonely hut. Dressed as a servant of the keeper of the arsenal, with whom I set off, I accompanied him as far as the city, and then, bidding him adieu, hastened to Bhowanee's hut.

I now felt like a new man ; my spirits were raised and my heart lightened by my interview, so that I was almost a different being. I was no longer fatherless, but had become of importance in society ! I felt that happiness might yet

be mine, and I bounded over the road with astonishing alacrity. Just as I reached the wood in which the hut of old Bhowanee stood, a *cassid* or letter-carrier passed me. Knowing he was the bearer of the English post, and on his way to Poona, I hailed him, and asked what the news were. "The rajah is dead!" he replied; and continuing his pace too fast for me to keep up with him, I could learn nothing more. I now felt that this was to me a most awful crisis. Now must we either stand or fall for ever! and the importance of this intelligence so occupied my thoughts, that I was close to the old woman's hut before I imagined I had gone half the distance. I found her within, and communicated to her what I had heard from the cassid. She told me she had heard the evening before that the rajah was not expected to live many hours. I begged her to proceed, and show me the way to the cavern. She said, in reply, that she must hasten away to Satarah, lest Sevaje should wish to communicate with Naroba on the affair, and that I must patiently await her return. This was a delay I little expected, but to which I was obliged to make up my mind. It was evening before she returned; and then she bade me follow her, and she would conduct me to the guide who would see me safe to the cavern. She led the way to a rude hovel; and knocking at the door three times, a man appeared, to whom she gave her despatches, and, pointing to me, turned away towards her own habitation. On my arrival at our place of security, I informed Naroba of the death of the rajah. He

observed that the time was now come to bestir ourselves, but first proceeded to read the despatches from Sevaje, which he found contained the same intelligence. Sevaje also acquainted him that he had prepared a document to be presented to the ministers and the British Resident, claiming his right of succession to the throne, and adding that he hoped Gunput Rao would be prevailed upon to submit the dispute to arbitration, and thus prevent tumult and bloodshed. He farther required us to remain in peace, and we should receive early intelligence from him of the result of the requisition which he had made. He further stated that, if his proposal were agreed to by the opposite party, he should nominate Naroba as one of the punchayet, to which his claims should be submitted. In order to induce Gunput Rao to come more readily into the measure, Sevaje had pledged his word to bury in oblivion the attempt that had been made by Gunput upon his own life, and the murder of his child. He concluded by saying that he eagerly awaited the reply of Gunput, and that he had every hope the dispute would be terminated without further bloodshed. If it were not, he had left no means untried towards its being done peaceably; and he was clear of all the consequences that might arise out of a different line of conduct on the part of his brother. Upon receiving Gunput's answer, Sevaje promised to forward another despatch.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I SHALL henceforth relate the progress of events as they unfolded themselves. The reader of these my memoirs will understand that all which I detail as having taken place before I again meet my father I glean from the despatches which almost daily reached us from Satarah, or from the direct communications of those concerned, unless it may be anything in which I was personally concerned. Gunput Rao took several days to consider the contents of my father's communication. With the conviction of my non-existence, he at last consented to an arbitration, relying on my father's promise of not divulging, either on the trial or afterwards, the attempt made upon his life; and further, that as my father's troops had deprived him of great part of the arrears of the estate, that he should not be called upon to refund any money that might appear to be against him, and in my father's favour. This being agreed to on the part of Sevaje, the preliminary conditions were signed by both parties. Naroba was nominated on the side of my father, and the rich banker, Sagoonah's uncle, on the part of Gunput Rao. The two others next named were my

father's friend, who filled the office of dewan at Satarah, and Lucknuchund Baboolchund, the farmer of Gunput's estate. The British Resident presided as umpire. This last arrangement was vehemently opposed by Gunput; but the Resident declared no arbitration should take place unless he were present as umpire, and Gunput was obliged to submit. Naroba now prepared to leave us to proceed to Satarah and sit in the court of punchayet, and I requested leave to accompany him part of the way thither, as I was now able to find my way back to the fort or cavern without a guide. Unwilling to make any display of pomp or parade, Naroba determined to proceed on foot. We set out accordingly one morning very early; and just as we were entering a deep valley, which led by the shortest cut into the main road, old Bhowanee appeared, spreading wide her shrivelled arms, and crying, "Stop, stop! there is danger in the glen—advance, and you die!" I observed to Naroba, "Can this be possible? Can Gunput Rao act so treacherously as to murder one of my father's arbitrators in so public a manner?"—"I tell you true," said the old woman; "hasten round yonder hill. From thence there is an open and safe path; 'tis a long way round, but delay not a moment." We thanked her, and offered her a present of some gold; but she turned away from it, saying, "Away!—avarice guides not my actions—away, away!"

"This is a strange being," I remarked to Naroba, as soon as we were out of her hearing; "what is the reason she

takes such an interest in Sevaje's affairs?" He said, in reply, no one knew, but the time would probably soon arrive when she might be brought to explain her motives. He commented severely on the treacherous act of Gunput Rao to waylay him, and observed that it must be noticed, for he had no claim now to be treated with like an open and honourable disputant, but to be crushed and put to death for an assassin. I observed that this was very true, but we could not prove anything against him beyond the words of the old woman, and they would have but little weight in the court. Naroba seemed convinced I was right, and saying nothing in reply, moved forward in silence. On arriving at the hill on which Satarah stands, I bade him farewell, hoping he would let me hear from time to time how the business proceeded, which he promised to do, and we parted.

Our band in the cavern was now commanded by a sirdar named Jysing, a Rajpoot of great valour and personal strength. Nothing occurred for two days after my return from Naroba. At length a despatch came, announcing his safe arrival, and that the arbitration had sat once upon the cause for which they were summoned, and that both disputants had entered into an engagement to abide by the judgment given. It appeared that Gunput had brought up the old story of the washerwoman again, and endeavoured to prove my father basely born; so that, from the nature of the investigation required, the business was likely to con-

tinue a long while in hand. At length the conclusion took place, and the award was made out ; but the umpire, aware of the hostile forces of each party being in the vicinity, declared he would not announce it until the armed bands of both parties appeared before the palace gates, and surrendered their arms. In the despatch which communicated this intelligence, Naroba mentioned his having written to me expressly some days before, and given me joy on the event of the trial. It was therefore clear that my father had made known to him the relation in which we stood to each other, conceiving, as the matter at issue was nearly concluded, there could be no danger in so doing. I was at a loss, however, to account for the non-receipt of such a letter. I feared, as it had miscarried, it had fallen into the hands of Gunput or his party. Still I apprehended no danger, even if this ferocious man should discover my near connection with Sevaje, as the business was settled, and he had bound himself to abide by the decree of the arbitrators.

At last the day that was fixed for our marching upon Satarah, to deliver up our arms before the palace gates, arrived. The award was still a secret to all but the arbitrators ; and they had been kept in the palace, lest through their means it should by any chance be made public. The anxiety manifested by the people was at its highest pitch of excitement, and crowds awaited the arrival of the hostile bands with great anxiety. Jysing, although about to surrender up his arms, determined to keep up the dignity of

the soldier to the last moment, and ordered every man to be prepared as if going to battle on the morrow. In consequence of these orders, swords were sharpened, horses caparisoned, and armour examined and securely buckled on ; so that we made, on the whole, a very imposing show. Two hundred of the number were mounted, and the remainder acted as infantry. I was mounted on Naroba's Arab war-horse, and never felt so proud and elated in my life. At length I thought my miseries were over ; I was no longer to be a wanderer over the country—an outcast, without a place to repose in ; but I might look forward to quiet and enjoyment. We proceeded to the open road by the hill, where I had last parted from Naroba; the spot was about four miles from Satarah. When we had got round the hill to a place where we could command a view of the road, we saw the corps of Gunput Rao proceeding slowly towards Satarah. On seeing us approach, they halted, and held out a white flag as a token of amity, and we did the same. We naturally imagined from this, that they were anxious we should all arrive together, and at the same moment, under the gates of the palace, and we accordingly approached them, greeting them as friends. When we were nearly close to them, however, Jysing, whose eye was upon the slightest movement among them, espied the sword of their commanding-officer or chieftain half unsheathed as it were impatiently. Convinced there was treachery before him, he gave his men the word to halt, and draw their swords, but

not to advance, acting solely on the defensive, and awaiting the intentions of the enemy. Nanna was close by my side, and said, "Pando, we shall have hot work—we shall be attacked!" The words were scarcely spoken before the conduct of Gunput became clear, by his cavalry forming, and charging us with great fury. Our men were dreadfully exasperated at such unheard-of treachery. They received the charge like well-trained soldiers, furious as it was; and our detachments were so nearly equal, for Canooje's corps had not yet joined us, that we were horse to horse in the cavalry and nearly man to man in the infantry. The latter having discharged a volley at each other, flung away their matchlocks, drew their swords, and fought hand to hand. At a distance, giving his orders, stood my treacherous uncle Gunput; while his son Mahadeo, and Kokoo, his chief officer, led on his men. Nanna speedily got engaged with Mahadeo. Both were mounted, and fought with deadly anger. Nanna was an excellent swordsman, and Mahadeo had acquired no small dexterity among the Pindarees. While they were in the height of their combat, Kokoo observed me near, and singling me out, made a furious charge upon me. He sat his horse firmly, and approached, shaking his two-edged sword, and gnashing his teeth with passion. When he came up to me, he cried, "I have found thee at last, thou would-be king!" His horse was tall, and my little Arab wheeling at the instant he came up to me, to avoid the shock which would have overturned us, he passed

me with the impetus of his horse's motion ; and before he could wheel round to face me again, I was close in his rear. This gave me a great advantage. I had now reason to rejoice at my good sword practice ; for whatever skill I possessed, I knew I should have occasion for it with Kokoo, who was a skilful swordsman and a bold enemy, but rather too forward and choleric. He cut at me with such fury at first, I could do little more than parry his blows. Of the state of the combat around me I knew nothing. Kokoo's violence, however, got the better of his skill ; he began to strike slower, and give me the opportunity of cutting at him occasionally, though without effect. At length we ceased, as it were by a tacit and mutual consent ; and while thus taking breath, I perceived a reinforcement of the enemy approaching. My heart sickened at the sight, and I made up my mind not to perish unrevenged : when I heard the cry of "Canooje!" from our own men. This revived me a little. "We shall still retrieve our fortune," thought I ; and raising my sword, I became the aggressor in attacking my antagonist. Kokoo's eyes flashed fire ; he defended himself dexterously, and soon converted my attack into a defence, by severing the reins in my left hand, so that my well-trained horse was no longer manageable. I saw my danger, instantly dismounted with a spring towards the rear of Kokoo's animal, and thrust my sword into its flank at the same instant, and all as it were by one effort. Horse and rider both fell ; but Kokoo was on his legs before I could

touch him, and being both now upon an equality, we hacked away without mercy. I had the advantage in height, and my antagonist in strength. At last he wounded me in the left shoulder by a slanting blow, and at the same moment I succeeded in cutting the cloth that fastened on his turban, just grazing his chin. The turban soon fell off; while, enraged beyond measure, he dealt a blow at me which had settled for ever all our enmity, had not I luckily contrived, more by chance than design, to receive it on my shield, which it penetrated half through, though made of rhinoceros' hide. My next cut, however, made at his bare head, before he could recover his guard, told home. My superior stature gave me more power in striking that part of the body than any other, and my sword entered his uncovered skull with such violence that it snapt in my hand! From Kokoo I had no more to dread; and taking up the weapon that dropped from his unnerved and yet quivering fingers, I was enabled to breathe a moment in comparative safety again.

Nanna, who had been as obstinately engaged as myself with my cousin Mahadeo, was the first object that caught my view. He was standing with his uplifted sword over Mahadeo, who lay stretched on the ground, mortally wounded. The combat still raged around me, save in the immediate spot where Nanna and Mahadeo had fought. Resting on my sword a moment, ere I went to the assistance of my friends on the other part of the ground, I saw old Bhowanee rush past me towards the spot where lay the fainting

Mahadeo. She uttered something which I was too distant and too much occupied to hear ; but Nanna told me afterwards that she screamed out, "Thou are there—thou art dying ! Thou knowest me (which it appeared Mahadeo did, by his horror at her presence). Did I not tell thee I should exult over thee one day ? Did not I tell thy father the sod should be thy only crown—the grave thy palace—the dust thy bed of state ? Govindah, my son, thou art avenged !" She was the same hag whom Mahadeo described he had encountered amid the terrors of the pit, where he buried the carcoons. The dying man seemed as if he would have answered her, and muttered something which could not be understood ; while, having spoken the foregoing words, Bhowanee walked as quickly away as her aged and shrivelled limbs would allow.

But to return to the battle, which still raged with great bitterness. Gunput Rao finding Kokoo had fallen, rushed among the combatants, and incited his party to fresh exertions. Age did not seem to slacken his courage, nor remorse to make terrible to him the prospect of danger. Just at this period, and before victory had declared itself for either party, a strong body of English cavalry came down upon us, and, commanding us to desist, made us all prisoners, with Gunput Rao at the head of his party, who seemed mortified to the quick, and bit his lips with rage. Canooje was killed, and Jysing was badly wounded ; I had received several slight scars, besides that which Kokoo inflicted upon me. Nanna

escaped unhurt; but almost all our mujmahdars were badly wounded, and we had seventy men killed. Our antagonists also suffered severely; Kokoo and Mahadeo, with four of their chieftains, were killed, and sixty men, besides twenty badly wounded. Thus terminated this bloody conflict, so wickedly planned by my cruel uncle, who had no doubt obtained a knowledge, by some secret means, of the result of the arbitration being in Sevaje's favour, and also of my being in existence. What his ultimate object was in thus attacking us I could not conjecture, unless he was actuated by revenge alone; for if he had succeeded in annihilating our whole force, my father was still safe in Satarah. Gunput Rao would not, therefore, have been one step nearer a throne; for had Mahadeo survived, his father's conduct, after our destruction, would have operated to prevent his succession. The violation of his word to the English Resident, and his attacking us so close to Satarah, would have been sufficient to effect this.

The officer in command of the English troops would not be supposed to know which party were the aggressors. We were all obliged to submit to be his prisoners, until he received orders from the Resident how to dispose of us. Gunput Rao marched at the head of the whole party, guarded closely; behind him were Nanna and myself; and then came the other officers indiscriminately. In this order we arrived at the city gates, and were just entering, when Bhowanee crossed our march, in front of Gunput Rao,

and pointing at him, set up a hideous scream, between a laugh and a shriek, and mingled among the crowd. My uncle's countenance saw her not unmoved, but he uttered not a syllable. The multitude followed us to the durbar, and the whole city was in the utmost consternation.

It appeared subsequently that Gunput Rao's plans extended beyond the attack of our party. We learned that Sevaje, deeming it proper he should appear at the head of his friends, as Gunput Rao was to appear with his followers in person, had left Satarah, and was proceeding to meet us on our road, when he was surrounded by ten men of Gunput's corps, who were taking him off, when the English came up with them, released him, and sent him back to Satarah with a guard. How the British troops came so opportunely to the spot where we were engaged, I did not at first discover. It appeared afterwards that the Resident, in order to give all the effect possible to the development of the award to the parties and people, and to confer all the dignity he could upon the proclamation of a successor to the musnud, had ordered the troops out accordingly, and they were under arms, waiting the arrival of the hostile parties. The delay in our appearance occasioned a strong suspicion that everything was not correct, and that, on the part of Gunput Rao, there was some foul play. Apprehensions were also entertained for the safety of my father, who had been seen to set out alone to join his soldiers. The Resident was deliberating on what step he should take, when intelligence was brought

to the durbar that Gunput Rao's troops had attacked those of Sevaje on their march. A strong detachment of cavalry was instantly sent off, with orders to protect Sevaje, who was on his way to meet his troops, unsuspicuous of treachery. The English cavalry soon came up with Sevaje, who had been made prisoner by Gunput's party, freed him, and sent him back to the city, escorted, as before stated, by a guard. The remainder arrived in time to prevent further bloodshed, and to make all on both sides prisoners.

Upon our arrival at the mansion of the English Resident, we were ordered to lay down our arms; and as soon as it was discovered that we were not the aggressors, we were all released, both officers and men. Gunput Rao was kept a close prisoner, and his men were marched off to a distance in separate parties, so as to disperse them as far from each other as possible; and then, after being warned not to be found again in arms, they were set at liberty. My father was sitting near the Resident when I entered the hall, and on seeing me, rushed into my arms, exclaiming, "My son, my son!" The Resident had heard of me before, and was consequently not unprepared for what he saw. He congratulated my father upon once more beholding me. Faint from fatigue and loss of blood, I was obliged to retire, and was conducted to my bed. The proclamation of the true successor to the Satarah musnud was deferred until the following day, that I might not be excluded from a participation in the ceremony.

Gunput Rao, in the meanwhile, was outrageous at being deprived of his liberty. He demanded to be set free; but no attention being paid to his requests, he at last maintained a sullen silence. Unfortunately for him, another cause had arisen to add to the heavy vengeance that hung over his head. A conspiracy was detected at Poona to excite a rebellion, and induce the inhabitants to throw off the British yoke. The conspirators also were discovered to be carrying on certain treasonable practices beyond that city. Several of the ringleaders, among whom were a Brahmin and a goldsmith, were blown from guns, by the orders of the British Resident. Some of the conspirators could not be found. One, however, was known to be Gunput Rao, the aspirant to the Satarah throne; and his friends at Poona only awaited the tidings of his success at Satarah, to carry into execution the most violent of their measures. Such was the state of affairs, when a express arrived from Poona, on the day my father was to be proclaimed, ordering the Satarah Resident to arrest and detain Gunput Rao until proof could be produced against him. The Resident, upon this, had my uncle brought before him, and openly charged him with mal-practices at Poona. Gunput, seeing all was known and concealment useless, boldly acknowledged his share in the plot, and that he was one of the conspirators. He was remanded to prison, and his confession reported to the Resident at Poona; while a separate despatch announced the decision of the arbitrators respecting my father, and the out-

rages of Gunput, together with his attempt to murder us many years ago. The Resident communicated this part of the despatch to my father, demanding if it were the truth. Sevaje replied he would rather be silent upon his brother's crimes, and most particularly upon those he now alluded to ; but he was compelled to acknowledge the report was but too true. The Resident urging him still further, he related the whole affair.

The royal succession was announced with great pomp. I was just able to go through the ceremony, seated by my father's side, though the proclamation was not long in reading. It was read in the Mahratta and English languages ; after which discharges of cannon and volleys of musketry resounded on every side. My father held a durbar the same day, and all the principal natives, with most of the English officers, attended it, and offered my father their congratulations upon this happy event, which had thus put a termination to his long sufferings, and placed him at last upon the musnud.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ON the following day the English Resident requested an audience of my father. He appeared before him with a melancholy countenance, and, after the customary compliments had passed, informed him that the fate of Gunput Rao was decided, he having received instructions to cause him to be blown from a gun within twenty-four hours after the receipt of the order. My father shed tears at hearing the sentence which was to be executed upon his enemy. Still he felt that enemy was his brother, connected with him by the closest ties of consanguinity, which, though the other had outraged, it became him not to forget. He could scarcely repress his grief within proper bounds on perusing the order, and, with a fervency of manner that did honour to his heart, he implored a commutation of the sentence. I seconded the petition; for, independently of my wish that his life might be preserved on my father's account, I was very anxious to learn from my uncle a full and true account of his crimes. By this means the world must be convinced of the injuries we had individually received, and of our indisputable claims to the throne. I mentioned the

different characters in which I had encountered Gunput Rao in the strange vicissitudes of my past life, and also that he had been the agent of the murder of the shastree, at the instigation of Trimbuckje Danglia, this being a point which I knew the British Government was most desirous of casting some light upon. The Resident conceived that a full and clear elucidation of this affair would be a plea that might possibly preserve my uncle's life; and in case Gunput would make a full confession, he promised to bring the consideration of the matter before the Poona Resident, upon our petitions in the culprit's favour. There was also this advantage attending the preservation of the criminal's life—namely, that the English would thus become masters of the full extent of the treasonable conspiracy at Poona in all its ramifications, and be thereby the better enabled to crush any minor associations to which it might have given rise, and to which they had no cue that would open a discovery. In the meantime, sentence of death was pronounced upon Gunput. The effect it produced upon his mind baffled all our previous calculations respecting him. We had expected an exhibition of that callous indifference to danger, that disregard to consequences and recklessness of the future which had always seemed to form a part of his character. The very reverse was the fact. Perhaps the constant state of excitement in which he had lived, and the high hopes cherished by ambition, had kept up his fierce spirit through his long career of guilt and

wickedness. Baffled at last, and no longer stimulated by the prospect of success, his spirit had given way ; he was unable to rally, and sank into despondency. However this might have been, upon his being brought up before the Resident, he seemed overcome with the horror of his situation. Pale and trembling, a cold perspiration crept over his frame ; his knees tottered, his lips shook, and the agitation he evinced on hearing his sentence, showed that he was no longer an object of fear. He with difficulty kept himself from falling to the earth ; and, when ordered back to his cell, he was obliged to be supported. My father was not present ; but I attended the scene, and shall never forget it. The mind that outrages every human obligation, that has smiled at murder, and followed the dreams of a flagitious ambition ; the hand that has been dipped in blood, and the heart fertile in the conception of crime, has in this life but one step to sink, but one moral degradation more, and that is, that it should meet the evil it has often inflicted upon others like a coward, when it falls upon itself. Seeing me, the offender meanly supplicated my interference to preserve his wretched life, and I more than ever despised him for it ; yet I was not unmoved, particularly on account of my father. I turned away my head, and made the miserable wretch no reply. On retiring I reflected upon my present situation, compared with that of my uncle. The vindictive, relentless Gabbage Gousla was changed indeed ; he, who had so long, so mer-

cilessly persecuted me, now sued to me for his life ! Alas ! what mercy did he ever extend to a victim ? Nevertheless, I determined to do all I could to preserve him. I went to my father, whom I found closeted with the Resident, prior to sending off the despatches for Poona, in which our prayers and requests were to be transmitted. As soon as my father saw me, he said, "He will be spared, my son ; I feel that he will be saved, if his proud spirit will allow him to make a full confession of all his enormities."

The event showed that my father was correct in his opinion. The English Government took up the subject in the view I had formed, willing to oblige a brother, and to develop secrets which Gunput only could unfold concerning their own affairs. The sentence of death was commuted into imprisonment for life, provided a true and ample confession was forthcoming on the part of the culprit, to commence from the day he quitted Satarah for the purpose of destroying my father and myself, to that of his imprisonment. My father thanked and embraced the British Resident for his kind intercession, and said, with tears in his eyes, that, had his unhappy brother met the fate to which he had been sentenced, his own remaining years would have been passed in unremitting sorrow. The Resident now put an end to the subject by saying that he felt confident this act of mercy conceded to his wishes on his ascending the throne, would be an earnest of his future clemency to his subjects,

and that he hoped his highness's reign would be a long and prosperous one.

The confession of Gunput Rao was to take place in public, in the event of his accepting the conditions proposed to him. The Resident sent for him under a strong guard, and the hardened sinner approached with the full idea of meeting his sentence. The gun which was to blow him to pieces, and scatter his mangled remains over the earth, was loaded before his eyes. The match was lighted ; and slowly, and with trembling knees, he drew near the fatal instrument. His countenance was haggard, his eyes deeply sunk ; fear made rigid every feature, and his pale and dry lip told that the fever of his soul had dried up all the moisture from his tongue. On being brought before the Resident, and informed of the conditions of his pardon, he seemed overcome by the unexpected event ; and at length, clasping his hands in agony, he exclaimed, " Spare my life, and I will confess every act and deed in which I have participated !" Methought at that moment he appeared more hideous than I had ever before beheld him. He was informed that though his life was spared he would be imprisoned in the fort of Ahmednugur for the remainder of his days. He bowed very low, even to the earth, and was then taken back to recover himself, having been informed of the day he was to make his confession, and unfold the dreadful catalogue of his enormities.

By this time I was become very impatient to hear about
VOL. II.

Sagoonah, and to clasp to my heart one who had shared with me in many of the vicissitudes of my adverse days. I despatched a suitable escort to Parwell to meet her, having first sent a message to Bombay to apprise her of the joyful news of my unexpected elevation, and to express my anxiety that she should participate with me in the prosperity that attended my steps. She arrived at the time I expected her. Our meeting was too full for description ; it was steeped in a joy that can be felt but not described—it was a sort of ecstasy, which is too like delirium for sober language to paint. Sagoonah was struck with no less wonder than pleasure, to find that I was the youth to whom she had been betrothed, and that her spouse was a prince. Women love show and splendour, and she was almost bewildered with delight. She put a thousand and a thousand questions to me ; her eyes, brilliant and deathly dark, sparkled, to think she might be ere long a queen ! Never before in Hindustan did man and wife meet as we met. Now were all our troubles and escapes rewarded, and become but subjects to jest upon, or beguile an idle hour in relating ! In the meanwhile, our fondness increased every hour ; and I should occupy time and space to little purpose, were I to attempt a relation of all we said and promised each other. My father was highly gratified by the beauty of Sagoonah, and not less by her modest good sense. He gave his blessing, over and over repeated ; and an early day was appointed for our nuptials, provided the Brahmins gave their consent,

as they are so tenacious of their rights of nominating the time of all weddings.

While my father and I were awaiting the hour to proceed to the durbar, and hear the confession of my uncle, I could not help asking him how the arbitrators on the other side came to decide so suddenly in our favour. He informed me, that, finding Sagoonah's uncle to be one of them, and that he adhered to Gunput Rao solely in the hope of marrying his niece to Mahadeo, it was quietly hinted to him that I was yet alive, and the betrothed spouse of Sagoonah. The banker finding this to be really the case, like a genuine trader thought it more to his advantage to affect a show of his sense of justice, and serve his views and credit with the public at the same time. He did not, indeed, care which married his niece, provided a prince was secured, and he therefore veered round to the party likely to be strongest. Thus the other arbitrator of Gunput was left in a minority at once. The solitary arbitrator, not wishing to stand alone, or side with a falling cause, signed his name to the award, without remark or observation.

Sagoonah was introduced to her rich uncle, who made her a number of complimentary speeches on her approaching nuptials. I left her at his house, the durbar being assembled to hear Gunput Rao relate his confession; and I promised Sagoonah to give her every particular as soon as it was concluded. The Resident, many officers, men of rank, sirdars, jagheerdars, Brahmins, and pundits, were present,

assembled around my father. The latter entered, and I followed, both of us dressed in a rich suit of kinkob, with a string of pearls, and a diamond sprig in our turbans. We were preceded by chobdars and mace-bearers, who vociferated our praises in the usual strain on entering the court ; and my father took his seat on a velvet cushion, embroidered with gold. I sat at my father's right hand, and the Resident on his left. When every one was seated, the culprit was sent for. In a few minutes the door of a side-passage unfolded. There was a stillness in the durbar, as if the world were dead. Every eye was fixed on the culprit, who seemed confused at first by the number of the auditory, but soon recovered a little, and took the place assigned him, with a guard on each hand. His lip was wan, and his cheek withered by anxiety, age, and apprehension. He began the following confession with a tremulous voice but strong accent, at times hurriedly, and then with great deliberation, as if he were fearful of his recollection failing him :—

“ In what I am going to say, my interest cannot lie on the side of truth or falsehood ; for enough is already known of my actions to prevent my concealing any part of the scenes in which I have been an actor from motives of shame ; the worst, perhaps, is already known. I shall state the simple truth ; the fear of the world's anathema cannot affect me in a dungeon ; and the good appearance I once endeavoured to keep up, and the holy character I attempted to sustain, I even then used as subterfuges or cloaks for my

deep-laid designs. I had flung everything on the hazard of a die, and fortune has betrayed me. I now, therefore, may well submit to my destiny ; and, where a knowledge of my life and actions may be useful to others, unhesitatingly reveal the secrets of my past years ; not that the advantage of others concerns me, but that, by so doing, I purchase life, which, in its very dregs, is dear to me, and the only thing that I can say I feel an attachment for in the world, now that my dreams of ambition are ended. Vain dreams, that dazzled to destroy ! If I have appeared overcome, subdued, humbled it is because I feel I am worse than nothing ; that even hope has forsaken me, that the preservation of my life is all I have now to obtain, and that it only remains for me to spend my future hours in solitude and chains. Still, time may reconcile me to these. But, to die ! no ; I could not die !

“ They told me that in my infancy I was considered of a wayward and obstinate disposition ; yet I showed an aspiring temper. It may or may not have been so ; education and intercourse with the world change our natural dispositions. It suffices, that on my arrival at man’s estate, my ambition and haughty conduct involved me in many disputes. One of these I will relate :—My estate lay close to that of my brother Sevaje ; and, being always anxious to increase my own property by any means, I claimed a piece of land belonging to my brother as my own. Sevaje refused to give it up to me. The cause was tried by a punchayet ; and,

by address and bribery, I got a decree in my favour, and secured the land. It was not long after this that my wife brought me a son, whom I named Mahadeo ; but she died in childbed. I was exceedingly grieved at her loss, and had scarcely recovered a little from the affliction into which it had plunged me, when I found that my son was carried off from his nurse, and could not be found. He was, however, soon after brought to me, having been picked up floating down a neighbouring river in a basket. - The person who found him was a young man named Govindah. Judging of my brother's disposition by my own, I readily imagined that this was his act, committed in revenge for the loss of his property. I therefore meditated a deadly retaliation, and consulted a friend how I should proceed to effect it. This friend it was who first conceived the idea of throwing a stigma on my brother's birth, and thus enabling me to lay claim to the right of the eldest son ; by which means, should the deposed rajah be reinstated, I might, on his death, succeed to the musnud. Hence sprung all my crimes. This little seed of ambition, sown in a soil so congenial to its growth, rapidly sprung up like a rank weed, and I fed upon it to intoxication. Years passed away, and notwithstanding unceasing attempts to fix a blot on my brother's birth in such a way that it should be fatal to his rights, I could not succeed ; he was still considered the eldest son, and everywhere respected and beloved. It happened that my brother had a son as well as myself, though considerably

younger than mine, named Jeoba. The child was seldom seen by any one; and, deadly enemies as my brother and myself were, it was not likely he would ever come into my sight, unless by some extraordinary accident. My friend and adviser, whom I have before mentioned, informed me one day that my brother had sought the hand of a girl named Sagoonah for his son Jeoba. This information greatly enraged me; for though the father of Sagoonah was poor, he ranked high in his caste, being no less than a Nagga Brahmin, and much respected by the people. Before my brother's proposals were accepted, I presented myself to the father of Sagoonah, and made an offer in behalf of my son Mahadeo. The father immediately mentioned to me the proposals made by my elder brother, and said that at present he could give neither of us an answer, as he must have time to consider well so important an affair. This reply did not entirely deprive me of all hope, and I remained quiet, determined that the father of the girl should not have any rational grounds for objecting to my alliance. I was, however, disappointed; the girl was betrothed to my nephew, instead of my son. This stung me deeply, my pride was wounded, and I vowed deep unrelenting vengeance on both father and son. I swore I would crush them, sweep them from the earth, annihilate them! Sevaje, knowing well my disposition, determined to quit his estate, and retire to Chandore, having occasion to visit Indore first, upon business. I obtained intelligence of his design; I knew he must pass

through a jungle ; and there, with two hired ruffians, I way-laid him and his child. The latter I wrested from him, and gave to my followers, desiring them to carry my orders into effect at a little distance ; and, as soon as they had turned their backs, I stabbed my brother, who instantly fell. I was going to repeat my blow as he lay on the ground, to make assurance doubly sure ; but hearing a noise, as of persons approaching, I ran away, I knew not whither. In my path I saw something white, which I found to be the boy, whom my followers, probably also in alarm, had flung down, but had not destroyed, as I intended they should have done. I snatched up the child, intending to have murdered it in a deep ravine that lay at no great distance, when I heard voices and footsteps very near. I felt certain that my brother's body had been seen, and I was pursued. I ran, to get clear of my pursuers, without knowing whither, and found myself, at last, close to some bullocks, apparently harnessed for marching, though not a single attendant was in sight. My pursuers gained upon me ; and to be caught with the child in my arms, would be to make detection certain, while it also impeded my flight. I had scarcely time to throw the boy among the bullocks, which were standing together in a knot, there being no hedge, ditch, or copse near, where I could leave him, and recover him, so as to make sure of his death. The pursuit still continued, until I entered a village, where there was a well, a little out of the road. Some bushes hid me from sight a moment, and I

went down the steps, and stood upon the lowest. My pursuers passed by into the village, and thus missed me.

"I remained in the well the best part of the night. All was quiet; and as I knew if I delayed until the dawn I should be found by the people who would come for water, and thus the villagers suspect me, I mounted the steps before day, and, once more in the fields, retraced my road, thinking I might recover my nephew; but I either mistook the path, or, if I did not, I could discover no bullocks, nor even marks of their feet, the way I travelled. I was thus foiled in respect to the child, whom I long considered dead, or brought up in some lowly cabin, and ignorant of his parentage, and that, therefore, I should hear nothing more of him. My surprise was great, a few days ago, to find, by means of an intercepted letter, that he was in existence, and well acquainted with his parentage. I was still more struck, when I recollect how frequently I had fallen in with him, whilst wandering about as a gossein, in years past, and how I have persecuted and lain in wait for him. My reasons for having done this will be seen in the sequel of my confession, at present I will continue my history, from the time of my brother's attempted murder, and the loss of his son.

"I now began to fear that inquiry would be made into the sudden disappearance of my brother and his child. I knew I should be immediately suspected as an accessory to it; and therefore caused myself to be carried into Satarah

in a litter, having previously cut myself in several places, and having my garments stained with blood. I gave out that my brother and myself had been attacked by ruffians, that I had fortunately escaped, but that I feared my brother and his son had fallen by their hands. I had taken the precaution to forge a letter as from my brother, inviting me to join him at Indore ; so that I fancied no suspicion attached itself to me. The father of Sagoonah, however, was by no means satisfied with my statement of this affair, and openly declared he would investigate the matter most strictly. I was in a great fury at this conduct upon his part ; and I determined, as I had gone so far in the case of my brother, I would not hesitate to take my revenge upon him. My guilt in this case was never even suspected, so adroitly was the affair managed : I removed him out of the way by poison. His wife became a suttee, and I saw her ascend the funeral-pile of her husband ; I saw the fire envelop her ; and I heard her shriek of death pierce through the red fierce flames with inward delight, when I reflected that no one thing now stood in my way to thwart my projects !"—[Here the auditory of Gunput uttered a groan of horror, but no one spoke. He paused a moment, and resumed his narrative.]

"The orphan, Sagoonah, was left unprotected ; but some charitable persons conveyed her to her aunt, at Poona. She had an uncle ; but as he resided in Marwar, and had never seen her, and she, perhaps, had never heard his name, the

roof of her aunt was her only secure refuge. This aunt was a very poor widow; and, by a singular coincidence of circumstances, I was very nigh staining my hands with the blood of her niece, though at the time little suspecting who my victim was. By an event no less strange, the girl was rescued and protected by the very man to whom she was betrothed—by Jeoba, my nephew, whom I had often met under the name of Pandurang Hāri. But to return to the regular chain of my history. After the funeral of Sagoonah's father and his wife, I saw no chance of our family succeeding to the musnud of Satarah, and I repented deeply the supposed murder of my brother; for that he was murdered I had not the smallest doubt. Being looked upon with an evil eye by many persons in society, I pretended to bewail my brother's loss, and gave out my intention of becoming a sunyasse, and retiring from the world. I very soon afterwards carried my intention into effect, having farmed out my estate, which, however, the Government sequestered, as soon as my absence and the course of life I had adopted were known. This act reduced me to real poverty, and I was also under the necessity of becoming a gossein. I caused my son Mahadeo to enter into the same mode of life, and we were regularly consecrated by a religious recluse, and duly commenced our wandering state of mendicity. Meeting with a set of gosseins, we joined them, and, conducting us to a cavern, they produced their ganga and opium, and began to smoke. The pipe was offered to me,

and I inhaled the somniferous vapour until my head became affected, and I fell down insensible. On awaking, I found my son had departed; nor could I obtain any tidings of him for many years, though I wandered everywhere in search of him. The prayers of the Peeshwa for a son being heard, he gave a grand feast to all the gosseins, from every part of India, who would come. I readily attended, and there first saw his confidant, Trimbuckje Danglia. He was then in the zenith of favour, and homage was paid to him by all present; but whether there was more reverence in my manner of saluting him, or he discovered in my eyes a beam of wickedness that corresponded with his own, and a talent that might be useful to him, I cannot tell; it suffices, that, after the feast was over, he sent for me. I waited upon him, and he demanded my name. I told him it was Gabbage Gossein—this was the name by which I went, after taking up a religious habit; but I was commonly styled Gabbage Gousla, from my supposed habits of avarice. Trimbuckje told me he was in want of a *guru*, a religious instructor, to his household, and made me the offer of the situation, which I gladly accepted, and took up my residence in Poona.

“I soon discovered that Trimbuckje was very careless on the score of his religious duties; like many statesmen who keep up an hypocritical show of regard for their established creeds, but in reality are of no religion at all. It was an excellent plea, however, for my being closeted with him

frequently, and thus I became a ready sharer with him in all his schemes of villainy. There being a great meeting of our tribe at Indore, I procured leave of absence, and proceeded thither. On returning I entered the hut of a recluse whom I met at Indore, and who promised to join me the following day. In his hovel I smoked ganga, and fell into a deep sleep, from which I was awakened by feeling water flung in my face. When I came to myself, I found that a traveller had discovered the hut to be on fire, had removed me from danger, and extinguished the flames. This traveller appeared to me a young man without money or employment, and apparently of such a pliable disposition, that I conceived, with a little tutoring, he might become very useful to me at Poona. I persuaded him to turn gossein on the spot, and to follow me. His name was Pandurang Hàrì. In stripping him to besmear him with dirt and ashes, I discovered he had a long bag of rupees tied round his waist. I made no observation to him on the discovery, but secretly determined the money should be mine by some means or other. We sallied forth on the road to Poona, not now thinking it worth my while to await longer the owner of the hut, who had delayed beyond the time fixed for his return. On the road I instructed my pupil in the art of raising money by begging. One method of extortion is by letting the blood flow from some part of the body, or by threatening to use a dagger; the person so threatened, knowing that ill fortune is the consequence if he causes the blood of a

gossein to flow, is instantly alarmed, and pays his mite. Thus we impose on the public credulity, and thus the greater part of the religious mendicants gain their profits. Not in the present instance desirous to wound myself, I proposed to my pupil that he should undertake the ceremony, whilst I collected the money. Pandurang Gossein was not the soft fellow I expected to find him ; for, on desiring him to cut, he drew the knife across my arm instead of his own. I raised a mob directly, and accused him of an attempt to murder me for my share of the money which he carried. His rupees were thereupon taken from him, and he was ordered to quit Poona. Having secured his cash, I had made the best bargain, and felt glad the fellow was gone, as he was much too sharp for an instrument such as I then wished.

"I now joined Trimbuckje again, and remained in his service some time ; when a difference occurring between us, I quitted him and went to Bombay, where I gave out I was deeply skilled in magic. I had not resided long in that city when my services were required to conjure to death an Englishman in office there. The person who brought me the written proposals was a peon in the police office, who, to my great wonder and amazement, I discovered was my old acquaintance, Pandurang Hàrì. I owed him a grudge, and when the affair was discovered, which from the incautious conduct of the parties it was very soon, I did not hesitate to implicate him in the plot, and he was imprisoned

in consequence. I was put into a room out of the common gaol, from which I contrived to escape in the night by bribing a police peon who had charge of the chowkee.

"I felt that Bombay was no place for me to remain in one hour longer, and I got clear off to Poona again. There interest induced me to seek a reconciliation with Trimbuckje. He became friendly again, and placed me once more upon his establishment. Nothing of moment occurred, until one day when the Peeshwa went to the Motee-baugh, when it appeared that he saw a pretty girl at a window. He became desirous of obtaining her for his harem, and Trimbuckje was despatched for the purpose of making her an offer to that effect, on the part of the Peeshwa. On getting a view of her features, Trimbuckje became enamoured as well as his master, and neglected his employer's interest for his own, proposing to take her under his protection. The girl refused indignantly, and threatened to make the Peeshwa acquainted with the way in which she had been treated. Had she done this, Trimbuckje must have been ruined; I was therefore employed to silence the girl effectually, and I engaged three gosseins of infamous character to assist me. We enticed her to a lonely house in the suburbs, where we prepared to stab her; but none had the heart to do it, and my companions seemed anxious to save her. Upon this I rushed into the apartment where we had secured the unfortunate girl, and grasped her throat with a violence I considered sufficient to occasion her death by suffocation. I then

opened the window and we threw her out, purposing to go round and convey the body to the river, and there fling it in. Before we could get to the back of the house where the window looked, we were necessitated to make a circuit of some distance; and on our arrival under the window, what was our surprise to discover the body gone! We were now all of us terribly alarmed. We lit torches, and proceeded to hunt about, even to the bank of the river. We had distinctly heard a splash, and concluded that the girl, having recovered enough to get upon her legs, and run she knew not whither from her fright, had made off unconsciously in the direction of the water and fallen in, or plunged in upon seeing us in pursuit. Still we were in doubt whether she was dead or not. Upon returning to Trimbuckje, I told him his orders had been executed, and he liberally rewarded me, and hoped he should hear no more of the murder. On the following day, to my great dismay, the aunt of the supposed murdered girl, by some unaccountable mode, obtained admission to the palace, and to the Peeshwa's presence, to whom she related the circumstances of the death of her niece as far as she knew. The Peeshwa, finding the murdered girl to be no other than she whom he was desirous of placing in his harem, was enraged beyond measure, and pledged himself to discover the murderer of the old woman's niece. Trimbuckje was in great alarm, and I was in no less fright, and we were considering how we could best ward off the blow that seemed impending over us, when a stranger

desired to be admitted to him. I was not then present, but what passed I knew from Trimbuckje. The stranger offered to criminate Habeshee Kotwall, a decided enemy of Trimbuckje's. He appeared to know every particular of the murder, and it must have been he, whoever he was, that carried off the body from beneath the window. I did not understand that he stated the girl had escaped death, by which I concluded she was really no more. I never saw the stranger until the day when, in the character of a magician, he entered the palace to accuse the Habeshee to the Peeshwa. I then determined to get a glance at his face, and going round by a private passage which led to the Peeshwa's closet, where the magician was seated, what was my surprise to discover, under all his disguises of paint and dress, my old acquaintance Pandurang HÀRÌ ! I was so struck I could scarcely tear myself away, and I was, I believe, nearly discovered by the Peeshwa. Pandurang in this affair acted entirely on our side, and in our favour ; it was not therefore my interest to thwart him. I awaited the result of his plans, which ended in the conviction and death of the Habeshee. Well, I thought to myself, this is a very clever fellow. How much was I mistaken in thinking otherwise of him ! There remained some mystery about the affair to be fathomed still, and I determined to watch the steps of Pandurang very closely. Observing Pandurang frequently gain access to Trimbuckje, I caused a man named Suntoo to watch his steps, and report to me his place of abode, the houses he

visited, and the individuals who resided with him. He obeyed my orders with great exactness, and one day informed me that he had watched Pandurang into the house of a poor cultivator at a small village near Poona, and also that two strange women were living in the same house. I instantly bade him conduct me to the place, and watching my opportunity, I appeared one day in presence of the women during the absence of Pandurang. Not having seen the features of the girl on the night of the intended murder, I could not be positive she was the person who escaped from me; but having seen the aunt crying before the palace gates, I instantly recognised her. Appearing before them as a mendicant, I dared not ask any questions; but being presented with a handful of rice, I departed. On my return to Poona, I made the most minute inquiries respecting the females who lately resided near the Motee-baugh, and to my astonishment learned that the girl had come from Satarah, and that the aunt was a poor widow woman who had resided for a long time in Poona. Could this girl be Sagoonah? If it were she, I rejoiced in her miraculous escape, for I had deeds of horror enough on my conscience, without adding the weight of the child's murder to that of the father!

"Anxious to know how affairs went on at Satarah, I left Poona, and journeyed until I came to a large tank, in which I bathed and refreshed myself. The shades of evening now gathered fast around me, and, fully aware that I could not reach Satarah that night, I began to look around for some

place of shelter. I found a lonely cottage with a light in the window, and being attired in the habit of a gossein, I did not hesitate to request a lodging for the night. An old woman opened the door, and what was my surprise on recognising in her person the mother of a boy who saved my son from a watery grave. I addressed her, saying I had seen her face before. ‘Indeed !’ she demanded ; ‘where ?’ ‘Near Satarah,’ I replied. She looked, but did not recollect my features. I inquired after her son Govindah. She answered in a mournful voice, ‘He is dead !’—‘And so young !’ I observed ; ‘surely disease could not so roughly handle him ?’—‘A villain handled him !’ she replied. ‘What, murdered !’ I exclaimed, ‘who could have had an enmity towards him ?’ She answered, ‘The wretch whose life he saved from the waters—he killed his preserver.’—‘Speak ! who mean you ?’ I asked. ‘Your son Mahadeo—your son,’ said she, looking me full in the face ; ‘and art thou, indeed, Gunput Rao ?—thou hast a son as great a fiend as thyself !’—‘Dost thou know where my son is ?’ I eagerly questioned her. ‘Canst thou tell me where he is to be found ; years have past since I beheld his face ?’—‘Question me not further about your miserable child ; he lives, no doubt—where, or how, I neither know nor care,’ she answered. I again urged her to explain to me where I should find my son, and expressed my belief he could not have committed such a deed. She told me to speak no more to her on the subject, for her brain maddened at the recollection of it ; and she bade me quit

the place before sunrise. Finding it impossible to learn anything more from her respecting him, I retired to my apartment, and in the morning pursued my journey to Satarah. The distance being short, I arrived about noon. While in the city I found that Sagoonah's uncle had returned from Marwar ; but that he intended to go thither again in about a year's time with an immense capital. I contrived to get introduced to his notice, and found him a man of haughty and aspiring ideas ; but before I mentioned to him my knowledge of his niece, I made more inquiries in the town concerning her, and the result was a firm conviction on my part that the girl I had seen at the cultivator's cottage, under the protection of Pandurang Härì, was the very same to whom my nephew had been betrothed. The report that the rajah would be reinstated on the musnud happened about this time, and kindled in my ambitious mind the desire of securing myself succession, though how to effect this object did not then appear by any means clear to me.

"My visits to Sagoonah's uncle at length became very frequent, and I at last ventured to mention him his niece, advising him to take her home and aggrandise himself and her by marriage. He assured me he was perfectly willing so to do, if he could find her out ; but all attempts for that purpose had hitherto proved abortive. 'Could I but find her,' he said, 'some rich jagheerdar would doubtless seek her hand in marriage, on account of my wealth, and the purity of her caste.' I told him he might soar higher than

a jagheerdar, for a prince might be proud of such a wife. ‘Princes,’ he observed, ‘are not so plentiful, and it seems the relatives of the present rajah are all dead.’ I told him not all, for the nearest of them stood before him. He inquired if I was Sevaje. I told him no—*he* was no more; but that I was his brother, Gunput Rao, and claimed the right of succession to the throne. The banker then asked if my son lived also. I told him he did, and, with his consent, should have his niece in marriage. He was much surprised at what I related, but told me I talked as if his niece were close at hand, demanding if I knew anything of her. I told him I did, and that I wished I had as accurate information respecting my son; but I pledged myself to find him out and deliver his niece to him, provided he pledged himself to compel her to marry my son, and aid us with his wealth in attempting the sovereignty. The banker, who looked no higher than a landholder for his niece, instantly agreed to my proposal, and promised his niece and his coffers should be at my command. He bade me first haste and secure his niece, giving me full authority to do so, and to bring her to Satarah. After some other topics were touched upon, I took my leave and hastened to Poona, imagining I could pounce upon Sagoonah without much trouble. But in this I was mistaken; for Pandurang Hàrì, having obtained a situation under Trimbuckje Danglia in Kandeish, had left the cultivator’s cottage, and proceeded to his station. I despatched a shrewd gossein after them; but although he

actually had them at one time in his power, he let them slip through his fingers, having been wounded by a bullock-driver, with whom he found it necessary to form an acquaintance. I employed divers stratagems to make Sagoonah quit her home in Kandeish ; but, being now on her guard, she never ventured out.

" Trimbuckje requiring my presence about this time, I could not proceed to Kandeish, but was obliged to depend upon my hirelings. The business upon which I went related to the murder of a shastree, who was on his way from Guzerat to the court at Poona. The particulars of this murder I can state when required ; I shall only now say that he was murdered ; Trimbuckje was suspected, and his person demanded by the British Government. In this predicament he consulted me, and I advised a quiet submission to his fate ; and that, as his life was not to be forfeited, there was every hope he might escape from his prison again. I recommended him to select the most cunning of his followers, amongst whom was Pandurang HÀRÌ, whose name I mentioned being anxious for his removal from Kandeish, to enable me to succeed in my plans relative to Sagoonah. Trimbuckje also appeared anxious that Pandurang should accompany him ; and his anxiety was so evident, that I could not help mentioning it to several of his most confidential attendants. I learned, to my mortification, that Suntoo, whom I had first set as a spy at the cultivator's cottage, had recognised the parties, and made Trimbuckje acquainted

with the existence of Sagoonah. Hence his anxiety to deprive her of the protection of Pandurang Hārī. I now saw plainly I should have to contend with Trimbuckje Danglia, and oppose my cunning to his force. During my last interview with him before his apprehension, he was pettish and quarrelsome, and I was haughty and insolent, which I then felt I might be, he being a fallen star. He resented my conduct, bade me depart and never appear before him again ; and I withdrew in a rage. Pandurang Hārī arrived, and set off with Trimbuckje to Thannah ; and as soon as they were gone I proceeded to Kandeish, where I found Trimbuckje's power had outdone my craftiness. Sagoonah and her aunt had been forcibly seized, and conveyed to Asseerghur, the killehdar of which place was a sworn friend of Trimbuckje's.

"Nothing daunted in my determination, I returned to Poona, and once more journeyed to Satarah, to report to the banker my failure. I said, 'Neither your niece nor my son are yet found ; I hope, nevertheless, to recover the former very soon, and then deliver her into your hands.' The banker expressed his regret at the circumstance, saying he left it all to me, as he was about taking a second journey to Marwar ; and on his return he should hope to find both the young man and woman awaiting his arrival at Satarah. Pleased at finding the banker still confided in me, I promised to spare no pains to do as he desired during his absence, particularly as his niece was running up and down the country under the protection of a vagabond.

"I found it impracticable to get the women out of the fort, and therefore awaited very impatiently the deliverance of Trimbuckje out of the hands of the English, and his re-appearance in the Deccan; for I never doubted but he would contrive, in some way or another, to effect his escape. In this idea I found I was ultimately correct. Trimbuckje, requiring the help of a friend, sent a messenger to me, desiring I would procure horses to be ready near the Thannah river. Not understanding the message delivered by the men sent, I journeyed to Thannah as a gossein, where I soon found out the intentions of the captive. I determined to aid him, that I might once more get admitted to his household, by which means alone I should be able to fathom his intentions towards the women at Asseerghur. I was the more ready to aid in his escape from finding that he only was to escape, and that his followers would remain prisoners; so that Pandurang Hārī could not interfere with my future views respecting the females. Trimbuckje escaped, and fled to Kandeish. The Peeshwa corresponded with him; but Trimbuckje's day of glory was over, and I found it a useless loss of time to dangle after him, and mingle in his train; yet hardly knowing what step to take, I stayed with him until the sudden arrival of Pandurang Hārī and one of his servants, who had been left behind at Thannah. The name of the servant was Nanna. He informed us of their having been seized by a horde of Pindarees, and of the events which occurred in a ruined fortress. The fellow related the story of a Mussulman,

named Fuzl Khan, which amused Trimbuckje highly. Finding this, he related the story of another of the band, who was a Hindoo, and, to my astonishment, proved to be my own son, Mahadeo, of whom Nanna could give me no account, after his escape from the Pindarees himself. Pandurang Härì was coldly received by Trimbuckje, who viewed him as a rival with Sagoonah, and wished him at the bottom of the sea. Not getting any reward for planning Trimbuckje's escape, as was promised him, he quitted us, and I have reason to believe, went to Kandeish, where he had left Sagoonah and her aunt. Trimbuckje said, when he quitted, 'He will find what he deserves at the village.' I therefore felt convinced orders had been sent there to put him out of the way, if he appeared again. I felt great pleasure at this, because, in that case, an obstacle in my way would thus be removed.

"I was so fully assured of the necessity of getting rid of this Pandurang Härì, that I determined to have him assassinated myself, should Trimbuckje fail to do it. I was meditating how I should best carry my intentions into effect, when Nanna, boiling with rage, informed me that Trimbuckje, instead of rewarding him, as he promised, for aiding in his escape, had repaid his services by intriguing with his wife, and that he determined to be revenged upon him at any risk. Anxious to secure such a tool to aid me in my purposes, and to follow up my plans respecting Pandurang Härì, I affected to enter into his feelings, and so

blew up yet higher the feeling of revenge that still lurked in his bosom, until he swore to murder Trimbuckje, by stabbing him when alone. I did not imagine he would succeed; but, whether he succeeded or not, the attempt would answer every end I had in view. He failed, and came to me for protection. I offered to save him if he would swear to serve me. He dared not refuse my terms; but consented, at my instigation, to murder Pandurang Hàri. For this end I concealed him for the time, and then sent Nanna, for the purpose of hunting him down, to Trimbuckje's village, in Kandeish, whither I knew he had proceeded. At the village I informed Nanna he would see two active agents of mine—men of singular courage, and with hands that had much blood on them—one a robber by profession; the other, named Kokoo, not at all his inferior, having a head to contrive, and a hand to execute any mischief. To these men I had intrusted the rescue of Sagoonah and her aunt from the power of Trimbuckje, and felt almost certain of success, anxiously awaiting intelligence from them. Trimbuckje Danglia's importance being gone, his friends and train fell off from him, one by one, and by and by he absconded, no one knew whither. Not hearing from Kokoo or Nanna, I determined upon proceeding towards the fort of Asseerghur myself; in passing which, I found the women were no longer there, having made their escape. In going through a deep glen, where there was but one small hut, being thirsty, I demanded admittance. The

door was opened by an old man, in whom I recognised my brother Sevaje, whom I believed dead long ago. I mentioned my name, received what I requested to drink, and departed. At times I had wished the blood of a brother lay not upon my head; now, when I saw him alive, a formidable obstacle to my views, I wished him out of the way most heartily; and hastening to Kokoo and his companions, I unfolded all my plans to them, and made them swear to murder the inhabitant of the glen as soon as possible. I thus buoyed myself up with the hope of learning that Pandurang had been despatched, the women secured, and my brother, the goatherd of the glen, as he was styled, really destroyed. On my arrival at Asseerghur, Nanna crossed my path, and we agreed to meet under the fort. Instead of hearing from him that my plans had succeeded, I was mortified at discovering that Pandurang Härì had not been found, that the women had escaped, and that Kokoo and his companions had been shut up in a cell, and left to starve to death. My anger knew no bounds, and it was some time before I could understand that Kokoo was living, but that his companion was a corpse. I immediately set out with Nanna to the place where this affair took place, because Kokoo was waiting my arrival there. On entering a dark cavern, Nanna led me to a small chamber, where he told me the body of Kokoo's companion lay, and that we should find him in another corner of the cavern. I entered, and, to my amazement, found two dead bodies instead of

one. It struck me Nanna was deceiving me, and I looked upon him as a traitor. Instead of finding Kokoo, we discovered a sick man, a stranger. Upon this my rage rose to madness; and, drawing my dagger, I struck Nanna with it in the side, and left him for dead. I now retraced my steps to Asseerghur by the road that led through the glen; and, on looking into the hut of Sevaje, I found Kokoo there, the door open, and my brother, the goatherd, fled. Kokoo was overcome with weakness after his incarceration, and was resting against the wall. It appeared that, owing to Kokoo's want of caution, they had enlisted Pandurang Härì himself to assist them; who, having heard all their designs, had fastened them into the cell at the cavern, and left them to perish.

"Kokoo was in a desperate rage to be so duped, and he swore vengeance, while I encouraged his relentless humour. We proceeded back towards Asseerghur, where I intended to give Kokoo necessary rest. On our way we met with a gossein whom I had despatched to trace out Sagoonah. He gave me information of her having been seen by a bullock-driver whom he knew, and that they were gone towards Guzerat. The bullock-driver stated that he might have brought them to Asseerghur, but for his employer, who, when he stopped them, released them, and suffered them to go their own way. This was two months prior to that day. Kokoo soon after volunteered his services to proceed after them to Guzerat with the gossein, who hoped to

overtake the bullock-driver in his return to Nasik. The latter was able to identify the persons of the women. I then bent my own steps towards Poona. The war was at its height; and as the English had possession of Poona, the probability of the Satarah rajah being reinstated became greater, and my hopes of success proportionably strengthened. On my arrival at Poona, I connected myself with several dissatisfied persons, and soon found myself involved in treasonable conspiracies. My amazement may be conceived, when the conspirators introduced me, at one of our meetings, to a young man, who, they informed me, was the successor to the Satarah throne, and one of the most active among them. This young man proved to be my unhappy long-lost son, Mahadeo, who was equally surprised at meeting his father again. When the conspirators were made acquainted with our affinity, they became more sanguine than ever; for, on my succeeding to the throne through the aid of the English, my first act was to have been to their injury, by an attempt to retake Poona. The particulars of this conspiracy are here." [Gunput now handed them in writing to the Resident.] "While we were arranging the proceedings in this conspiracy, Kokoo returned from Guzerat, informing me that he had been disappointed at Broach, by the seizure of two strange persons, instead of Pandurang and Sagoonah. He had left spies over them, being obliged to remove from the neighbourhood himself, from motives of personal safety. These spies followed a man and woman to Satarah, and we

secured them ; but found we had obtained a strange female, of whom we knew nothing, and a man, whom I ordered to be imprisoned, until we could get from him some account of the motions of Pandurang Hàri and Sagoonah.

"I had heard my brother Sevaje was in Satarah, but where concealed I could never discover. It was reported he had assembled near six hundred men, determined to fight for the crown on the death of the rajah. I called a council, and it was resolved that we should also increase our numbers ; for the pay of whom I proposed that I should, by some sacrifices, obtain the arrears of my estate-rents and of my brother's, from the time of their sequestration. We discovered that my brother received his money from Shewdhut Wanee, of Indore, and that the best method to cut off these resources was to despatch Wanee out of the way. This Kokoo did with his own hand. My brother's partisans, however, attacked my treasure, and deprived me of a great portion of it. I thus began to despair of weakening his forces, and at length acceded to his proposal of the trial by punchayet of our respective rights, not for an instant supposing he was aware of his son's existence. Finding matters, in this respect, the reverse of what I expected, I repented the giving my assent to this mode of settling our claims, and despatched a party to cut off Naroba, on his way to the arbitration. By some means my plan miscarried. Naroba was a shrewd and keen fellow, and I dreaded his influence and penetration. I had considered Sagoonah's

uncle my staunch friend ; but, to my surprise, he all at once became cool, and seemed to have no longer any zeal in my behalf. The decree, too, I found, before it was promulgated was not in my favour. My troops also had captured despatches from Naroba to the commander in Sevaje's stronghold, and with them a letter to Pandurang Hāri. What was my astonishment at discovering, from its contents, and the congratulations mingled up in it, that he was the Prince Jeoba, the son of Sevaje, and the successor to the musnud ! 'Now,' thought I, 'the sovereignty is gone from me for ever ! but if I cannot mount the throne, neither Sevaje nor his son shall. I will strike a blow to effect this, if we all perish together !'

"I summoned Kokoo, and we arranged, that when our respective corps met to enter the city, we should charge Sevaje's troops. Understanding my brother would proceed to join his men in person, we waylaid him, and got him into our power. How he was rescued I need not tell. From the conflict I alone survive ; my son, Kokoo, all my principal confidants, have fallen ! I now stand alone. My dream of ill-starred ambition has vanished ! That which cost me so much toil, anxiety, and crime, is as if it had never been ! No longer excited by criminal hope, or supported by the perpetual attraction to the great object of my wishes, my spirit has fallen back upon itself. It is indifferent to any state of things with life, and henceforth it must be occupied by corroding reflections, and that bitter anguish

of the soul which scorches, but consumes not—which tortures, but will not destroy! I bow, therefore, to that fate which it cannot be said I have left one effort untried to thwart; and when I enter the dungeon where the remnant of my wretched hours is to be passed, I shall reflect that I am but another victim added to those who have been sacrificed in the pursuit of the objects of a criminal and too daring ambition?"

Such was the miserable history of my uncle's guilty career. The whole of it was reduced to writing, and the part which he gave in added to it, containing the details of the murder of the shastree, and the conspiracy at Poona. When the durbar broke up, I hastened to Sagoonah, to lay before her the particulars of my uncle's confession. I took the same opportunity of relating my own adventures, previous to the time when I rescued her from the hands of the assassins. My father, who was present, severely chid me for many of my actions, and read me a lecture on the crimes of my juvenile days. Except pleading the mode of my bringing up, and the people with whom I associated—the rabble of the camp, and the society of those who, like myself, were dependent upon chance for existence—I could offer no defence, and bowed to his censures. On his retiring, I remained alone with Sagoonah, both of us anticipating the pleasures of the future, and our union in those bonds which death, in Hindustan, can scarcely be said to break asunder.

In a few days my father determined upon going in state

to the Temple of the Preserver, to make *pùja*, and I prepared to accompany him. Crowds of his subjects were assembled to behold their new sovereign, and among those present I observed Fuzl Khan. How he found his way to Satarah I could not imagine; but, on my return to the palace, I sent for Nanna, and got him to make some inquiries respecting Fuzl. Nanna told me that he had been some days in Satarah, and having heard that Pandurang Hàri was a prince, determined upon getting a sight of him, hoping he should not be entirely forgotten. I sent for him, and the fellow came, making as many salaams to the very ground as he made to Nagoo in the fortress of Asseerghur, before he sent us out to plunder his wife. "How," said I, "came you in Satarah?"—"Since your highness saw me at Broach, with irons on my legs," he replied, "much has happened to me. The dulness of a convict's life was by no means suitable to my disposition, a high-spirited Musselman as I had always been. Your highness will not, therefore, censure me for having dashed out the teeth of my guard, with the irons placed on me for securing my presence, and then taking to my heels. I wandered about the country for some time, till I found myself at Jumbooseer, where a number of boats lay at anchor. I hired myself to the tindal of one of them; and, in the character and capacity of a sailor, I arrived at Bombay. There I left my master, and wandered about the Deccan, until chance led me to

Ahmednugur, where I was imprisoned upon a false charge. In the same gaol with myself were several Bheels, who were imprisoned for life. These men got hold of the muskets of the sepoys, and some cartridge-boxes of the sebundees, a militia corps, and by these means expelled their guards, and took possession of the gaol, amusing themselves with firing the muskets into the air. The magistrate of the place, however, becoming alarmed, surrounded the prison with troops, so that escape was impossible. No greater mischief had been done by this frolic of the prisoners, than the waste of a few rounds of musketry, which showed, if bloodshed had been intended, the unhappy prisoners would have known better than to destroy their means of defence for amusement. The officers on the outside called to them to open the doors ; but the prisoners, enjoying their fun, paid no attention to the mandate. Horrible to relate ! the doors were then blown open with a six-pounder, and a whole corps marched into the gaol, which corps was commanded to put the unresisting prisoners to death. I could not conceive such a dreadful example would have been made by those who pride themselves upon their humanity, as the Toope-Wallas are accustomed to do. The poor, naked, defenceless men crouched up in one corner of the gaol, having thrown away the muskets with which they had been frolicking ; and, never making a show of resistance, were fired upon, from the distance of a few yards only, as

they were begging for 'mercy. I was, fortunately, perched upon a wall, and escaped the effects of this merciless and barbarous act. Twenty were shot dead, and twice as many wounded. The English Government, it was thought, could never sanction this inhuman act; but it appears that those in authority were very well pleased with the civil officer's conduct. It is strange that the Toope-Wallas boast of their desire to do justice, but never take notice of complaints against their agents in cases similar to the present. The officer makes his own report of his own conduct; and this they take, in all cases, to be true, and boldly uphold it in the teeth of fact; because, if he had not been a true worthy man, they would not have employed him! Moreover, the prisoners in this case were but black rascals, and the gaol wanted thinning; so that the prisoners commenced their frolic at the most convenient time. As for myself, I descended from the wall, and was thrust into a cell, and deemed a lucky fellow to have escaped. A cart came the next day, and took away the bodies of the slaughtered men, as well those who had as those who had not to do with the tumult, and carried them to the place of interment, in which it was desirable to bury the recollection of these murders at the same time. My term of imprisonment having expired, I was set at liberty, and found my way to Satarah, to throw myself at your highness's feet." Fuzl Khan having thus concluded his history, I observed to him that it was impos-

sible I could employ one on whom no dependence could be placed ; but I advised him to enter as a soldier, and if his conduct were correct, I would take care he should not want promotion and encouragement, for I should keep him carefully under my eye. He bowed, and went away, looking sullen and disappointed.

I afterwards inquired into Fuzl Khan's extraordinary history of the massacre of the prisoners, and I found it was too correct. How the magistrate would have been enabled to justify himself to the Government, had he been accused, I cannot tell. The latter would have relied upon his official statement, perhaps, and the matter would have been just as it was. I mentioned it to one Englishman, who showed great reluctance to enter into any conversation upon the subject, or even to hear it mentioned, and many of his countrymen seemed equally indisposed to make it a subject of conversation. Hence I conjectured that this wicked deed was not thought much higher of among the Toope-Wallas than by ourselves ; and that it was not likely to add much to the reputation of their countrymen in the East or West. Perhaps the silence of so many upon this subject, should the foregoing surmise not be correct, may be attributed to the known modesty of our conquerors, who never indulge themselves in anything like a boasting, even of their most valiant acts ! It would also, no doubt, be presumptuous to suppose that anything but dire necessity,

and a wholesome regard for the security of the city and gaol (so deeply involved as they must have been !) could have led a magistrate to a measure of such unparalleled and monstrous severity.

The next step which I took relative to myself was the holding a consultation of Brahmins respecting my marriage, which, they were of opinion, should be celebrated as early as possible, with the same forms adopted on our betrothment. On the day nominated, I proceeded to the residence of Sagoonah's uncle, with whom she was residing ; and having been welcomed in due custom as a guest, he presented me with the hand of my beloved, which I took with rapture. The priests then bound our hands together with grass, after the usual way, and I threw the cloth over my bride, which was, in the present case, of unusual richness ; the corner of it was fastened to my garments, and I made the oblations to fire, while my bride dropped the rice into the flame as her offering. The bride having stepped upon the sacred stone, we both walked round the fire (I cannot help relating every particular of a ceremony, though so well known, because it was one so important to myself) ; and before the ceremony was completed and irrevocable, the Brahmins made Sagoonah go through the tedious seven steps, the Brahmins using a text of the holy writings to each : the first step for food, the second for health, the third for religion, the fourth for happiness, the fifth for

cattle, the sixth for wealth, and the seventh and last, for priests to perform sacrifices. I then approached my bride on the completion of her task, saying, "May none interrupt us!" Next, I was obliged to address the spectators, and say, "This woman is auspicious! approach, and view her; and, wishing her well, depart to your homes." The spectators being gone, I remained, as usual, three days in the banker's house; and, on the fourth, conducted my bride, in great pomp, to my own residence, where my father awaited her arrival, and received her with great solemnity, ending all with oblations to fire.

What more can I have to record, the perilous and varied years of my life being past, and having arrived at a tranquil and secure haven? I have performed my promise, as recorded in the first chapter of this my history. My readers now know my real birth and parentage, and the difficulties and troubles I had to encounter from my youth up to the present happy period. Should the reverses, which it is often the destiny of man to encounter, reduce me from the elevation of the musnud to private life again, or should my future years be filled with eventful circumstances of a public or private nature, I may once more intrude myself upon the world. For the present, then, my labours are over; I cease to write, and seek, in repose, to scrutinise my errors, and enjoy that peace which, at one period of my life, I thought fate had never destined to be mine.

I composed these memoirs of myself to leave behind me, for the benefit of my children, a testimony of their father's vicissitudes in life. Now, while I am writing, I have one child, a son, whom, in compliment to my early protector, Sawunt Rao, I have named Pandurang Hàrì.—Courteous reader, farewell!

THE END.